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Derek Beck

B.A. Dunelm

CHORAL WRITING IN SELECTED
SACRED WORKS OF IGOR STRAVINSKY

A Conductor's Guide

Submitted for the degree of B Phil

in the Arts Faculty of the

Open University

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For the creation of works of art there is a condition of the spirit that must be achieved and preserved at all costs. This condition can be compared to what the religious term a 'state of grace'. It is a state of exaltation, of communion with life, nature and his fellow beings which enables the artist unconsciously to exalt, re-create and transcribe the world about him.

DUNOYER DE SEGONZAC

CHORAL WRITING IN SELECTED SACRED
WORKS OF IGOR STRAVINSKY

This 'guide' pursues two aims: to provide a model for the exhaustive score preparation needed by any choir-trainer, professional or amateur and to put Stravinsky's choral canon into historical and critical perspective. A twofold analysis includes technical details of the works and an assessment of their aesthetic qualities from both the audiences and the choral singer's standpoints.

The technical analysis contains

- a) the conductor's survey of scores under the headings of form, choral textures, melody, rhythm, harmony and instrumental accompaniments
- b) advice on rehearsal and concert procedures
- c) stylistic recommendations gleaned from the composer's own writings and recordings (listed in an annotated discography).

Additionally, a brief history, an identification of texts used (with translations of less familiar Latin verses), details of instrumentation and some contemporary judgements by professional critics are provided for each work.

The aesthetic analysis covers

- a) the quantity and quality of the sacred choral works in relation to the rest of Stravinsky's output and that of major contemporaries
- b) their relationship to sacred choral music in Stravinsky's Russian past
- c) the degree to which they embody the composer's cultural and religious tenets.

The composer's personal religious philosophy and his idiosyncratic views on word-setting are quoted from many sources (chiefly the published 'conversations' with his assistant Robert Craft) together with the composer-conductor's ideas concerning performance practice.

Stravinsky is an important composer for his longevity, eclecticism, variety of compositional media and strength of personal artistic and spiritual principles. Nearly one quarter of his original compositions employs massed voices yet, with few exceptions, it remains seldom heard in live or recorded performances. This is explained in terms of executant difficulties and also aesthetic estrangement from performers and audiences alike. Such arguments underlie the dual aims of the thesis, both directed principally at the choral conductor in whose hands may lay the antidote to this music's current neglect.

Derek Beck

November 1981

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Reference Abbreviations

- CH An Autobiography (originally 'Chroniques de ma Vie', 1935)
Igor Stravinsky. Calder and Boyars, 1975.
- CO Stravinsky in Conversation with Robert Craft. Penquin, 1962.
- DO Dialogues and Diary Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft.
Faber, 1968.
- ED Expositions and Developments Igor Stravinsky and Robert
Craft. Faber, 1962.
- MC Memories and Commentaries Igor Stravinsky and Robert
Craft. Faber, 1962.
- MQ The Musical Quarterly
- MT The Musical Times
- PM Poetics of Music Igor Stravinsky (trans. Arthur Knodel
and Ingolf Dahl). Harvard University Press, 1970.
- SPD Stravinsky in pictures and documents Vera Stravinsky
and Robert Craft. Hutchinson, 1979.
- TC Themes and Conclusions Igor Stravinsky. Faber, 1972.
- Vlad Stravinsky Roman Vlad. O.U.P., (2nd edition) 1967, 1971.
- WW Stravinsky, The Composer and his Works Eric Walter White.
Faber, (2nd edition) 1979.

Musical quotations commence either with a bar number (65)
or a rehearsal figure (50).

INTRODUCTION

The complete register of Stravinsky's works in Eric Walter White's study of 1979 (WW.) lists 109 original compositions and 14 arrangements. Of these, 25 items involve music for chorus including one expansion of a Bach organ work and one completion of sacred songs by Gesualdo. As can be seen from this list the choral writings span the composer's entire creative life but with some significant concentration during the final years. Indeed, seven choral compositions came from the last decade, all of them employing sacred texts. A total of fifteen original works with massed voices have religious subjects (Zvezdoliki sets a mystical poem and the Cantata semi-sacred fifteenth and sixteenth century lyrics).

Stravinsky's music employing choral forces.

1904	Cantata - lost
@ 1911/12	Zvezdoliki
1908/14	The Nightingale
1914/17	Four Russian Peasant Songs
1914/17	The Wedding
*@ 1926	Pater Noster L.
1926/27	Oedipus Rex L.
@ 1930	Symphony of Psalms L.
*@ 1932	Credo L.
1933/34	Perephone
*@ 1934	Ave Maria L.
* 1937	Petit Ramusianum Harmonique (unison)
@ 1944	Babel
@ 1944/47	Mass L.
1948/51	The Rake's Progress
@ 1951/52	Cantata
@ 1955	Canticum Sacrum L.
@ 1957/58	Threni L.
@ 1960/61	Sermon, Narrative and Prayer
*@ 1962	Anthem
@ 1961/62	The Flood
@ 1965	Introitus L.
@ 1965/66	Requiem Canticles L.

Arrangements

@ 1955/56	Chorale variations on 'Vom Himmel hoch' (Bach)
*@ 1957/59	Tres Sacrae Cantiones (Gesualdo) L.

* a cappella @ - sacred/mystical text L. - Latin text available

Yet the bulk of this choral output remains rarely performed compared with Stravinsky's many vivid instrumental scores. Two reasons for this

seem pre-eminent: performing difficulties and emotional restraint.

Chamber (professional) choirs do not formally command the necessary orchestral forces to enable them to include Stravinsky's pieces in their concerts whereas (amateur) symphony choruses are too unwieldy and precarious in musicianship to cope with the rigours of the serial works in particular. The Symphony of Psalms is an exception to the latter situation, but that work in common with all the other sacred choral pieces is so short that it has to be carefully complemented by other choral music to make up a viable programme for a large choir. Brevity may of course be a virtue in the eyes of some concert promoters. The early a cappella works are obviously the most accessible technically and may even be employed liturgically in either Orthodox or Roman rites (depending on the language chosen). The only other liturgical example is the 1948 Mass (Roman), a fine, apt setting for service use except for the professional instrumental support needed (the absence of an alternative organ accompaniment from the composer being much regretted). There is thus a professional bias in executant terms to the corpus of Stravinsky's sacred choral music.

Performers may in addition be deterred by the ascetic, intellectual quality of much of this genre. The Wedding and Oedipus Rex are more overtly dramatic than the religious pieces and vocal austerity seems to increase chronologically, the later serial works making the greatest demands on both singers and listeners. Restraint, perhaps appropriate to texts such as those of Threni and the Requiem Canticles, is at the opposite pole to the extroversion of the narrative Russian ballets which are performed most regularly.

Accessibility, technical and aesthetic, points up some important distinctions between pre- and post-1950 specimens of Stravinsky's choral literature. All the earlier works are dominated by homophonic textures

and syllabic word-setting reflecting a combination of folk-music idiom and nineteenth century Russian church chant, two important influences on the young composer. This primitive choral technique naturally befits the nationalism and peasant ritual portrayed in The Wedding (first performed in 1923) and was a style which 'went on influencing Stravinsky's major choral works right up to his serial phase'.¹ It is also a style whose simplicity breeds confidence in (amateur) performers and technical hurdles are therefore fewer in the pre-1950 phase. Serialism fosters counterpoint with independent rhythms and fiercely independent harmonic clashes. Pitch accuracy must be highly developed for convincing performances of the later choral pieces. From Threni onwards we see rhythmic complexities reflecting the mind behind the Rite of Spring. This compares dramatically with the much less ambitious (and often less vital) rhythmic demands of the earlier music where the vocal parts frequently adopt a slower pace and generally more staid character than the accompanying instruments. The Symphony of Psalms clearly exemplifies this. It is in the secular The Wedding and Oedipus Rex that we see the most energetic choral writing in the early period.

It seems that the choral music of Stravinsky always compares unfavourably with his purely instrumental. Stravinsky the orchestrator, pupil of Rimsky Korsakov, is certainly masterful in handling instrumental bodies large and small and by comparison his 'orchestrating' of choral forces is somewhat routine. In a century of spectacular vocal experimentation (using, for example, speech, poly-choral writing, vocalisation, free rhythms) there seemed to be a reluctance on Stravinsky's part to exploit

1 Stephen Walsh. 'The Choral Music (Homage to Stravinsky)', Tempo No.81, Summer 1967, p.42. Walsh adds a personal criticism (p.43): 'The absence of counterpoint in his pre-serial choral works.....is certainly a limitation, which becomes marked as his style disgresses more and more from folk music. In the early works, block writing, or, more specifically, accompanied melody is decidedly Idiomatic. In Persephone (1934), where page after page of choral writing is wholly non-contrapuntal, the somewhat Bizetian effect is apt to become cloying'.

choral colour to the same degree as his innovative orchestral writing. Textures favoured the traditional SATB with few passages divisi or unison and choral speech (which appeared briefly in The Wedding) only became an element as late as 1959 in Threni. However, the following titles did make use of specific vocal combinations as shown:

Zvezdoliki)	
Oedipus Rex)	
Babel)	TTBB
Introlitus)	
<hr/>		
Symph. of Psalms)	
1948 Mass)	all-male SATB
<hr/>		
Persephone		SATB + SA children's chorus
<hr/>		
Centata		SSAA
<hr/>		
The Flood		SAT
<hr/>		

Further stumbling blocks to a more ready acceptance of the composer's choral output are concerned with textual matters. Stravinsky's whole approach to words in music was thoroughly individual. From the earliest extant choral piece his treatment of the text became phonetic rather than semantic. 'His (Balmont's) Zvezdoliki ('The Star-faced One') is obscure as poetry and as mysticism, but its words are good, and words were what I needed, not meanings'.¹ Further evidence of the composer's use of words as pure sound material is presented in Chapter Three but the following quotations reinforce the spirit of abstract detachment which the sacred choral works in particular illustrate. '..... music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood or a phenomenon of nature'.² This oft-quoted sentiment was underlined years

1 MC. p. 83.

2 CH. p. 53.

later when Stravinsky spoke of '..... my lack of sympathy with music as an advertisement for extra-musical causes. As I see it, even the greatest symphony is able to do little about Hiroshima'.¹ The religious choral works may well be seen as 'personal outpourings' not only of the composer's spiritual beliefs (see Chapter Three) but also of his abstract artistic ideals. It is significant that a major work such as the Mass of 1948 was not commissioned or prompted by anything other than its creator's personal motivation. And even where a sacred text lends itself to dramatic treatment this does not ^{? tempt} away the composer from his emotional reticence. The television score The Flood makes scant dramatic impact, being welded to a most concise, intellectual musical idiom (serial with pointillistic touches of orchestration). Serialism as handled by Stravinsky is unemotional, surrounded by fixed dynamics and fixed metronomic pulses. Yet the majority of this artist's serial pieces set words to music. Perhaps the words are here left to provide communication, even some of the much maligned 'expression', amidst the music's abstractions. Stravinsky also provides Latin texts for nine out of fifteen religious works with chorus. Such a monumental language could reinforce the argument that Stravinsky's religious works are 'personal outpourings' not necessarily easy of communication. But in view of the composer's eclecticism and his multi-lingual background it would seem more reasonable to accept Latin as a universal vehicle for spiritual communication plus the means of heightening the hieratic quality aimed for in most of the religious choral pieces.

Still technically controversial is the composer's refusal to reconcile textual with musical accents. Stravinsky's arbitrary shifting of stresses to different syllables, even of the same word when repeated, is only explained by his own revelation of the contrast between Russian verse spoken and

¹ TC. p. 98.

Russian verse sung. Speaking of the text setting in Renard (1915-16) he admitted that 'one important characteristic of Russian Popular verse is that the accents of the spoken verse are ignored when the verse is sung. The recognition of the musical possibilities inherent in this fact was one of the most rejoicing discoveries of my life.....'¹ Stravinsky continued to adopt this metrical freedom throughout his career no matter what language was being set.

The historian may ponder over the proportion of choral and specifically religious works in Stravinsky's total output. He may question the apparent division of these works into two main styles, pre-1950 and post-1950, comparing this with the usual tripartite labelling of the composer's other music to acknowledge Russian, neo-classical and serial phases. It is true that neo-classical elements are rare in the choral pieces (the Mass being the best 'retrospective' work). The sacred output thinned during the years of Stravinsky's settling first in France and then in the U.S.A. and there was a period of estrangement from organised religion (1910-26) at the start of his migrations. However, the sacred choral music is noteworthy not just for its numerical significance in the catalogues. First, it represents a striking contrast with the composer's large-scale orchestral output, especially the early ballets, in having less original scoring for the voices, shorter durations and less emotional/dramatic intent. Secondly, it does reveal originality of media - but in orchestral and instrumental terms rather than in purely vocal requirements. Thirdly, it stands as testimony to its composer's religious faith throughout an increasingly secular period of world history.

The following survey attempts to provide detailed illustrations of all the above aspects of this major composer's writings for massed voices.

¹ ED. p. 138.

But it does so from the particular viewpoint of the performer and especially that of the choir-trainer. It is his preparedness to understand and cope with both the executant and aesthetic challenges of these pieces which may counter their current neglect in the concert-hall and elsewhere. Therefore he needs to be conversant with the composer's musical and spiritual roots as well as his oft-quoted views on his preferred styles of singing, playing and even conducting. Such background information is presented here along with exhaustive reference material on the most important items in the repertoire. Technical analyses concentrate on vocal characteristics assisting choir directors in their readings of the scores and offering some discussion of rehearsal and performance problems, including the handling of accompaniments. Textual information, including translations, details of scoring, summaries of each work's early history and critiques from secondary sources are provided. A final summary draws together elements common to several choral works and tries to relate these to other material from Stravinsky's music and that of his principal contemporaries.

THE RUSSIAN BACKGROUND

'A man can pray in his own room, but he will never pray there as he prays in Church.....where the singing of many voices rises united towards God, where all have but one thought and one voice in the unity of love.....

On high the Seraphim proclaim the Trisagion, here below the human multitude raises the same hymn. Heaven and earth keep festival together, one in thanksgiving, one in happiness, one in joy'.

(Saint Joseph, Abbot of Volokolamsk)

Stravinsky's parents were not active churchgoers and, typical of their class in late nineteenth century Russia, were somewhat anti-clerical. Nevertheless, we learn (E.D.pp.72ff.) that Stravinsky himself was required to attend services locally and to read the Bible. That he was familiar with the sounds of Orthodox worship is clear from his remarks concerning the Three Sacred Choruses quoted on p. 32 and though references to earlier Russian music, sacred and secular, are unusually rare in the composer's autobiographical records he must have absorbed much of the traditional music of his homeland during the forty-four years preceding his first setting of a religious text. Even since the demise of the Imperial order in 1917 performances and recordings by Soviet choirs¹ have included impressive examples of Russian Orthodox church music dating back to at least the sixteenth century and modern editions of such music have been produced in recent times by Soviet academics.

The style of contemporary Orthodox worship, which Stravinsky experienced in pre-Bolshevik Russia and in his adopted countries of France and the U.S.A., is described in Timothy Ware's comprehensive book The Orthodox Church.² Many facets of this worship are reflected in the composer's sacred music output (such as the restraint of the choral

1 For example, Russian Choral Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries, USSR Russian Chorus conducted by Alexander Yurlov (1968). HMV/Melodiya ASD 3102.

2 Penguin, 1969, pp.272 ff.

scoring and the influence of bell-sounds in so many accompaniments) as well as showing time-honoured links with an ancient past and with Western Catholicism, so much admired by Stravinsky. The basic Orthodox services are comparable to Roman Catholic usage, including: Holy Liturgy (Mass or Eucharist), Divine Office (Matins, Vespers and the six 'lesser hours' of Nocturns, Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Compline) and Occasional Offices (Baptism, Wedding, Burial etc.). 'Vigil Services' are celebrated on Saturday night in anticipation of the usual Sunday eucharist, and combine Vespers, Matins and Prime. Services are usually conducted in the modern vernacular but Russian-speaking churches use ninth century translations in Church Slavonic (qvED. quote on p. 23). All services are sung or chanted, there being no equivalent of the Roman 'Low Mass' or the Anglican 'Said Celebration' and such singing was, until recent times, the domain of the choir and was unaccompanied. Organ sounds are a twentieth century development principally of the Greek Orthodox churches in America. The use of hand or sanctuary bells inside the church is rare in most Orthodox situations but they have outside belfries and a penchant for ringing bells not only before but at various moments during a service.

Christianity was officially accepted in Russia by Prince Vladimir of Kiev in 988 following on from the work of the Byzantine missionaries SS. Constantine (a former monk named Cyril) and Methodius begun in Moravia in the ninth century. Throughout these years service books were prepared in Slavonic translations and the earliest surviving musical manuscripts date from the next two centuries. In typology these represent faithful translations of Greek Orthodox liturgical books and 'there is great flexibility and conscious adaptation of Russian Church Slavonic words and composite terms in emulation of their Greek verbal equivalents'.¹ The notation used has been traced (for example, by Preobrazhensky c.1909)

1 Milos Velimirovic, The New Grove, Vol.16, 1980, p.337.

to the 'Chartres system of Byzantine neumatic notation'. From the twelfth century onwards Russia lagged behind Byzantium in producing a systematization of church chant notation and transcriptions of early Russian religious music are thwarted by ambiguities.

Though there was some diminution of musical documentation during the fourteenth century there was a shift of religious and cultural focus to Moscow and Novgorod. Gradually Slavonic equivalents of neume signs were adopted, such as the terms znamya and kryuk and the collective label znamenniy raspev or 'chanting by signs'. By 1500 Russian neumatic notation had severed most of its earlier links with Byzantium (which fell in 1453). Timothy Ware describes¹ the fifteenth century artistic conflict in Russia between Possessors (or conservative Orthodox churchmen) and Non-Possessors led by Saint Nilus (or Nil Sorsky, d.1508). The formers' defender was Saint Joseph whose defence of beauty in worship is evident from the quotation heading this chapter. Nilus, however, feared 'that beauty might become an idol: the monk..... must be careful lest a devotion to beautiful icons or Church music comes between him and God, (in this suspicion of beauty, Nilus displays a Puritanism - almost an Iconoclasm - most unusual in Russian spirituality.).....' We will see just such aesthetic reservation in Stravinsky's approach to sacred texts, particularly those with potential liturgical use.

From the sixteenth century onwards virtuoso singers like those of the Novgorod school and the styles of secular folk-song began to influence Russian church music. Bol'shoy raspev or 'great chant' appearing towards the end of that century incorporated melismatic embellishments of originally simple melodies and the corpus of Russian chant formalised into

1 op cit. p.116.

well known. There he had published a version of Zarlino's theories which appeared in Russian (Musikiskaya grammatika) in 1677, describing notation and a concept of major and minor modes and a 'mixed' scale. A vigorous four-part setting of part of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (which received famous treatments by Tchaikovsky and Rakhmaninov) has been recorded by the USSR Russian Chorus (ASD 3102).

'The earliest school of Russian church composers in the new style were all pupils of Diletsky, who taught them the principles of imitation, contrast between solo and choral groups, and the Venetian practice of choirs singing antiphonally which he had learned from his Polish master Mielczewski'.¹ We must remember that Schutz's polychoral music is contemporary with Diletsky and his followers Titov and Kalashnikov. The latter produced a twelve-part setting of the Vespers plus 23 twelve-part sacred concertos (dukhovnie kontserti or partesniye kontserti - 'concertos for many parts'). His works in twenty-four parts usually employ three or six four-part choirs singing antiphonally. He also set the Cherubim Hymn from the Liturgy of St. John - which occurs at the Great Entrance of the officiating priests - and the central of three sections contains an example of harmonic canon at one bar's distance between three choirs. In all, over 500 specimens of sacred concertos, some in up to forty-eight parts, have survived from this period. Kant, another late-seventeenth century term, referred to block-chord chants for approximately three voices some of which 'suggest a Polish origin for this genre (possibly as a by-product of influence from the Lutheran chorale)'.²

Empress Anna (1730-40) invited Italian composers to the Russian court where they found an already 'established practice of polyphony in the church'.³ Catherine the Great (1762-96) surrounded herself with

1 Gerald Abraham's sleeve note (1975) to ASD 3102.

2 Velimirovic, op cit. p.341.

3 ibid.

Italian musicians. Baldassare Galuppi (1706 - 85) came to St. Petersburg instructing Dmitry Bortnyansky (1751 - 1825), a member of the Imperial Chapel Choir. Maxim Berezovsky (1745 - 77) studied in Italy with Padre Martini in 1765. He also sang in the Imperial Choir and in the many performances of Italian operas in Russia at that time. Both men still favoured the sacred concerto form and 35 out of over 100 sacred choral pieces by Bortnyansky are concertos with psalm texts. 'They preserve the contrast between solo group and chorus, but there are not so many sheer mass effects and the contrasts are most noticeably of pace and texture'. This description by Gerald Abraham could well apply to sections of Rakhmaninov's Vespers two-hundred years on. Berezovsky's concerto setting of four verses from Psalm 71 makes full use of solo group/tutti contrasts and concludes with what is claimed as the first Russian fugue ('Let them be confounded and consumed'). Rhythmic vigour and full dynamic ranges make these settings remarkably dramatic, if not operatic, and thus notable parallels to the accompanied chapel music of courtly Vienna in the same period.

The earliest printed Russian church music dates from 1772 when four volumes of znamenny chant were published. Six years later came an Obikhod, equivalent to the Roman Liber Usualis. 'Although Emperor Paul issued in 1797 an edict banning the singing of concertos during services, nevertheless there were many abuses in the next half-century (including a setting of the words of the Cherubic Hymn to one of the choruses from Haydn's The Creation)'.¹ Bortnyansky, who had made little use of older traditional melodies, continued to write concertos and in 1816 was appointed a kind of censor of church music giving him supreme control of Russian sacred music until his death. Artemy Vedel'(1767-1806)

¹ Velimirovic, op cit. p.341.

was another impressive contemporary who wrote only sacred music despite his non-membership of the Court Chapel. His concerto setting of Psalm 13 has a middle section 'In which Russian scholars see a reflection of the narrative melodic style of Ukrainian folk-singers'.¹ A high C sharp for chorus sopranos in this work matches the extended range of the bass voices (frequently C and B natural below the stave), already a hallmark of Russian choruses by this time.

(On 2 February 1978 BBC Radio 3 recorded the Cambridge University Chamber Choir under Alexander Goehr in a recital featuring 'Anonymous Russian religious polyphony of the 16th-18th centuries: seven pieces from Examples of Old Russian Vocal Art edited by N. Ouspensky'. This edition, published in Leningrad in 1971 contains rare examples of written out heterophony. The choral sounds included melismatic plainsong for equal voices in unison, in octaves and in heterophony, organum 4ths and 5ths, two-part writing mixing parallel with contrary movement and fully harmonised chant including dramatic punctuation by rests. There was also evidence of some of the close intervals such as 2nds which mark early choral harmonies. Some four-voice homophony contained Palestrina-like ornamentation of most lines though no obvious imitative polyphony. This multi-voice polyphony, with its stepwise melodic style, exactly matches that of 16th century Italian and English church music, including false relations so typical of, for example, Thomas Tallis. The music heard was not dated precisely but if we are to accept Abraham's view² that 'in the age of Palestrina Russia was musically still in the 11th century' then fairly rapid progress was made over a period of two hundred years, more particularly with the acceptance of the staff notation of choral polyphony.)

Bortnyansky's successors as chapel directors included Fyodor L'vov (1766-1836) and his son Alexey (1798-1870). L'vov veered towards a German chorale style. The chapel used 'abridged versions of traditional tunes' and L'vov harmonised these in his own style and sometimes introduced choral recitatives on a single note. Compared with Bortnyansky

1 Abraham, op cit.

2 ibid.

L'vov's music is harmonically richer carrying the centus firmus in the top voice part. His style has been designated the 'St. Petersburg School' and among its adherents was Alexander Arkhangel'sky (1864-1924) who first introduced female voices into the chapel choir in the 1880's. During the 1830's the Italian style was continued by Glinka who, before his premature death, planned to study modal harmony which he felt was right for Russian religious music. One of his followers, N.M. Potulov (1810-73), provided simple, non-dissonant, non-modulating harmonizations of all the melodies in the 1772 Synodal edition of znamenny chant.

The younger L'vov helped publish an edition of the Obikhod in 1848 which became mandatory for all churches in Russia. Settings for four voices appeared in this book and were widely used. (In 1847 Berlioz remarked on the high standards of church music performances under L'vov.) As German influence superseded Italian L'vov's successor, N.I. Bakhmet'yev (1807-91), produced his version of the Obikhod in the 1860's. '.....the pale, recitative-like lines of the obychny chant are here given in the vertical chord arrangement, but with barbarous doublings in the basses'.¹ A reactionary, Bakhmet'yev resigned his post in disgust at Tchaikovsky's Op.41 Liturgy of 1878 which was approved by the Holy Synod of the Russian Church though not officially by the Imperial Chapel. This contains a sumptuous setting of the Cherubic Hymn, one of several from this composer. Its homophony allows for changing choral textures such as antiphony between blocks of high (female) voices and lower (male) singers, and much favoured oblique movement (away from a held pedal note, often inverted). Chromaticism, a generally slow pulse and fairly slow harmonic rate, and low bass registers including B naturals below the staff are other features of this a cappella music. Like Kalashnikov's

1 Alfred Swan, op cit. p.335.

Kheruvimskaya referred to above Tchaikovsky's setting falls into three broad sections but is not on the same dramatic scale in terms of polychoral effects and exaggerated dynamic contrasts. Bortnyansky had also supplied a version of the Cherubic Hymn text (recorded on ASD 3102) which begins strophically and concludes with a vigorous, independent Alleluia section. This may be compared with a simple, four-voice setting again by Tchaikovsky (1884?) and generally published in English text versions as Hymn to the Trinity. Each of four verses repeats the same homophonic music, very diatonic and maintaining a low tessitura in all four voices. However, the final Alleluias achieve a climax by a rise in pitch and a change to imitative polyphony:

Ex.3

The musical score for Ex.3 is a four-voice setting of the 'Alleluia' text. It is written for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The texture is homophonic, with all four voices moving in parallel motion. The lyrics are 'Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia'. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The score is in 4/4 time and G major.

Rakhmaninov's Hymn to the Cherubim (published in English in 1915 and presumably extracted from his Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom of 1910) follows a similar plan to that of Bortnyansky - a planissimo first half with some repeated material preceding a joyous Gloria plus Alleluias. The opening quoted below illustrates similar choral texture to Tchaikovsky's 1878 Hymn together with a rich divisi treatment of the homophony. The Gloria

Adagio

Soprano: Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ev-er bless-ed Lord God Al-migh-ty:

Alto: Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ev-er bless-ed Lord God Al-migh-ty:

Tenor: Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, Lord God Al-migh-ty:

Bass: Ho-ly, ho-ly, Lord God Al-migh-ty:

Ex.4

concluding this short setting points strikingly to the Gloria chorus in Stravinsky's opera-oratorio Oedipus Rex (qv.p.213).

Tchaikovsky's most famous short chorus is his own harmonization of the Legend ('The Christ-child had a garden') from his Chansons pour la Jeunesse of 1883. This arrangement,¹ made in 1889, treats the first three verses strophically with parts regrouped in verse 3 to give the tenors the principal melody. The bases occasionally divide and the final low B naturals in octaves recall Bakhmet'yev's 'barbarous doublings in the bases'. Tchaikovsky's sacred output includes a Vesper Service (1881), Three Cherubic Hymns (1884) and Six Church Songs (1885) and his pedigree in this field is assured by his editing of Bortnyansky's complete church works.

Bakhmet'yev was replaced at the Imperial Chapel by Balakirev who served from 1883 to 1895 and introduced Rimsky-Korsakov as an assistant. By this time the 'St. Petersburg School' was waning. Rimsky-Korsakov harmonized some chants but significantly not znamenny material. Here 'the principles of harmonizing folksongs are transferred to church music'.² A new school developed in Moscow centred on the Synodal choir under

1 An English version is 'The Crown of Roses', No.197 in the Oxford Book of Carols.

2 Swan, op cit. p.335.

V.S. Orlov (1856-1907) and Stepan Smolensky (1848-1909) with important pre-Revolutionary composers like Alexandr Kastal'sky (1856-1926) and Pavel Chesnokov (1877-1944). Kastal'sky revised Potulov's harmonisations of znamenny chants using modal chords after the manner of Russian folksong and allowing cantus firmi to migrate through all voice parts. The harmonies were intended for large choirs divisi (Kastal'sky later supplied alternative small choir versions) and rhythms were free, as in the chants themselves.

At the peak of pre-1917 church composition is Sergei Rakhmaninov (1873-1943) with an apprentice sacred concerto performed by the choir of the Synod School in 1893, his Liturgy of 1910 and the magnificent Vespers Mass Op. 37 in memory of Stepan Smolensky (1915). Both the latter works remain in the a cappella tradition, are massively homophonic in the main and emphasise a rich bass resonance. The Vespers is a huge work (approximately one and a half hours in duration) in fifteen numbers (2 using a solo mezzo-soprano and 4, 5, 9 a solo tenor). Five of the movements derive from znamenny chant, two from so-called Kiev chant and the second and final numbers from Greek chant. The diatonic melodies are comparatively narrow in compass and restrained within stepwise movement and in the traditional repetitions the composer uses free melodic variations characteristic of Russian music. Modal harmonies complement the borrowed chant material and rhythms are gentle favouring long breathed phrases in slow tempi. Antiphony between groups unequal in size, plus massed accompaniments to the solo voices (almost Stravinskian in the oscillations of No. 2) lend variety to the choral scoring and the broad dynamic range echoes that of so many of the polyphonic works from Diletsky onwards.

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Stravinsky could 'endure unaccompanied singing in only the most harmonically primitive music' (E.D.p.76) and only four brief examples of

his choral work dispense with accompaniments (qv.p.1). It would therefore seem that the influence of the vast and unusual repertoire of Russian church music surveyed above would be slender. Indeed, it is interesting to see how far Stravinsky diverges from the traditions of his mother country, in his avoidance of lush divisi scoring for choirs, the absence of choral antiphony, the non-literal restraint in dynamic levels and the scarcity of melismatic vocal writing. However, there are features from the past that do intrude into both the a cappella choruses and the accompanied works of this composer. We shall see considerable use of homophony and rhythmic unisons up to and including the serial phase in Stravinsky's career. Melodies of limited range and generally non-angular profile dominate his early scores and as late as the 1948 Mass there will be chant-like lines on monotones or alternating two notes close in pitch. The ballet The Wedding even quotes Orthodox chant (qv.p.202) and some of the rugged primitivism of music such as the Three Sacred Choruses and the Mass embodies something of the character of the more rhythmic specimens from Ouspensky's 1971 collection described above.

The orchestrally supported secular choruses of Stravinsky's predecessors did not in fact offer him more variety in choral writing than the church works. Speaking of both opera and choral music for the concert-hall Gerald Seaman traces a common descent from the choruses of Glinka (1804-57) - 'who borrowed much from the contrapuntal technique of Handel' - and Borotnyansky.¹ Russian choral societies were slow to develop before the openings in 1862 of the St. Petersburg Conservatory and the Moscow Free School of Music, and nineteenth century musical styles were divided between native Slavophiles and those who looked to Western

¹ In Choral Music, ed. Arthur Jacobs, Penguin, 1963, p.294. In E.D. p.63 we learn from Stravinsky the oratorio diet provided by St.Petersburg theatres during Lent:

Berlioz	Damnation of Faust
Mendelssohn	St. Paul
Schumann	Paradise and the Peri

Europe for models. Mussorgsky (1839-81), Tchaikovsky (1840-93) and Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) were the giants providing secular choral music in the Slavophil tradition.

Apart from four diatonic arrangements of Russian Folk-songs (1880) for unaccompanied male voice chorus (the medium for a number of Stravinsky's pieces starting with Zvezdoliki in 1911) Mussorgsky provided two dramatic choral works with orchestra. The Destruction of Sennacherib, originally (1867) to a translation of Byron's Hebrew Melodies with piano accompaniment and then to a French translation (1874) with orchestra, is for mixed chorus in a predominantly syllabic and homophonic setting. Greater drama, with dance-like rhythms and episodes for mezzo-soprano and baritone soloists, is evident in the vocal writing of the Hymn In Praise of Joshua (1874-77). An inscription on this score claims its origins in Jewish melodies and fragments from the unfinished opera Salammbô. A male chorus is again used for Rimsky-Korsakov's cantata The Song of Oleg the Wise (1899), probably the most colourful of four cantatas linked by patriotic subjects and large orchestral palettes. The text by Pushkin is treated largely syllabically with dramatic rhythms, section-by-section contrasts in dynamics (there are tenor and bass soloists) and chromatic harmonies against simple, folk-like melodic lines. And yet one can agree with Seaman again when he says 'the principal fault of the cantatas is the unimaginativeness of the choral writing, which is eclipsed by the virtuosity of the orchestral parts'.¹ Here is an ominous portent for the works in the same medium by Rimsky-Korsakov's most eminent pupil.

Brahms	Requiem
Haydn	Creation/Seasons
Handel	Messiah/Judas Maccabaeus
Bach	St. Matthew Passion

¹ op cit. p.295.

STRAVINSKY, RELIGION AND WORDS

Not only are Stravinsky's life and career well documented but also his personal views on subjects ranging from philosophy and theology to the actual craft of composition. The present study must be considered against a background of the composer's thinking on both religious matters and the technique of combining verbal with musical expression. Such thinking has been recorded at various points in Stravinsky's career from the Chroniques de ma Vie of 1935, through the Charles Eliot Norton lectures for 1939-40 to the various interviews with his assistant Robert Craft, the last being published posthumously in 1972. It is worth quoting at length from these sources in order to understand firstly the deep intent behind the sacred choral music and secondly the often arbitrary, usually idiosyncratic method of welding texts to music.

Stravinsky was baptised at birth ¹ (due to 'frailty') into the Russian Orthodox Church. 'I was born out of time in the sense that by temperament and talent I would have been more suited for the life of a small Bach, living in anonymity and composing regularly for an established service and for God'. ² Stravinsky's paternal grandfather Ignace was a Roman Catholic Pole who married an Orthodox. By Russian law children of such mixed marriages were to be brought up Orthodox, and so Stravinsky's father was baptised in the Russian Church. Roman Vlad tells us (p.3) that Stravinsky gave his Polish origin 'as a possible reason for his spiritual leaning towards Catholicism, since of course the Poles are fervent adherents of the Roman Catholic Church'. Considerable uncertainty has surrounded Stravinsky's allegiance to Roman Catholicism with recent writers even suggesting conversion. Stephen Walsh wrote ³ that the 1948 Mass was for liturgical

1 5 June ('Old Style' Julian Calendar), 1882....on St. Igor's Day!

2 DD. p. 123.

3 op cit. p.46.

use in the Roman Catholic church 'of which he had recently become a member'. It was the Mass which led Denis McCaldin to say of the composer that 'he was first a member of the Russian Orthodox Church and later converted to Roman Catholicism'.¹ The confusion is perhaps in too loose a use of the word 'convert' when 'sympathiser' is all that is meant. Eric Walter White records, as below, Stravinsky's lapses from Orthodox worship but in neither edition of his monograph suggests total conversion to Rome. Elsewhere,² however, White writes about the composer that 'some time after his second marriage he transferred his allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church' and cites the Latin text music of the late 1940's as representative of this change. More definitive on this subject is Roman Vlad who stated in 1971 that '.....unlike his sons, who became Catholics, he has never given up the Russian Orthodox faith' (Vlad p.3).

Vagueness also attaches to the dates of Stravinsky's (temporary) abandonment of Orthodox church-going. WW. (p.85) suggests that 'at the age of 17 or 18 he had abandoned the practice of his faith'. The composer offers the period 1897 to 1924 (ED. pp.72-8) yet earlier gives 1910 as a date when he became a lapsed communicant (MC. p.152, qv.p. 32 below for full quote).

He interestingly adds (ED. p.76) that 'perhaps the strongest factor in my decision to re-enter the Russian Church rather than convert to the Roman was linguistic. The Slavonic language of the Russian liturgy has always been the language of prayer for me, in my childhood as now. I was a regular communicant of the Orthodox Church from 1926 to 1939 and again, later, in America. Though I have lapsed in the last decade - more because of laziness than of intellectual scruple - I still consider myself a Russian Orthodoxist'.

Concerning 1926 WW. further quotes the composer's description in Dialogues of a pilgrimage to see the body of St. Anthony in the Basilica at Padua that spring. He felt that there his prayers were answered and wrote that

1 Stravinsky, Novello Short Biography, 1972, p.15.

2 European Music in the Twentieth Century, ed.Hartog, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, p.42.

'I do not hesitate to call that moment of recognition the most real in my life'. It was a decade in which Stravinsky was 'in a state of acute religious tension' and WW. (p. 85) illustrates this with comments by Serge Lifar: '.....in 1923 we find him finally repudiating the ballet, his religious convictions no longer permitting him to employ his art in anything so base as theatrical ballet. (Indeed a letter to Diaghilev at this time speaks of the ballet as "l'anathème du Christ")'. 1

Regarding the music of this period and answering the specific question of what is religious in the character of the music of Oedipus Rex Stravinsky said (DD. p.26):

'I can testify that the music was composed during my strictest and most earnest period of Christian Orthodoxy I also composed a Russian liturgical-style Pater Noster at the same time as Oedipus Rex, and I was certainly influenced in composing the Gloria chorus (Oedipus score fig.90) by Russian Church ritual: the Holy Trinity is symbolized by the triple repetitions, just as it is in the Kyrle of the Mass. But, to begin with, the character of the Gloria music itself is ecclesiastical'.

From November, 1921, until his first wife Catherine Nossenko's death in 1939 Vera de Bosset was his constant companion. She married him in 1940 but was herself married back in 1921. This romantic triangle may have partly explained the religiosity evident in his life and music in the 1920's and '30's. His letters to and from his wife and friends made frequent reference to Saints. Le Jour, 16 May 1936 refers to visitors describing 'an icon of the Virgin with a small flame flickering in front' at both Stravinsky's Nice and Paris Homes. As late as 24 October 1950 Stravinsky wrote to the wife of his elder son asking her to look for 'the diptych of Saint Sualre that was always on

1 Serge Lifar, Diaghilev, Putnam (London), 1940. This sentiment is extended to Wagnerian opera in Stravinsky's 1935 autobiography: 'Is not all this comedy of Bayreuth, with its ridiculous formalities, simply an unconscious aping of a religious rite?It is high time to put an end, once for all, to this unseemly and sacrilegious conception of art as religion and the theatre as temple'. (CH. p.39).

my piano and that must still be in storage in the Rue Antoine Chantin'. ¹

'After 1948, Stravinsky's religious affiliations are not entirely clear. In March 1953 Life reported: "He loves to read theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas and Kierkegaard and is fairly regular in his attendance at Los Angeles's Russian Orthodox Church". But, next to the statement about church attendance, Stravinsky wrote in his copy of the magazine "not true". In earlier years, he talked freely about his devotional attitudes. Thus in an interview in Barcelona in March 1928 he revealed his intense interest in philosophies of religion and in such mystics as St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila'. ²

Stravinsky, speaking of Abraham and Isaac in an interview with Leroy Aarons (New York Journal American, 13 December 1964) explained that

'In my Christian religion, the Abraham sacrifice is the greatest sacrifice, other than Jesus, of course, but we are talking of the Old Testament. It seems to me to be very close to the philosophy of Kierkegaard, which I esteem very highly'. ³

Discussing a lunch with Stravinsky, Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood, Robert Craft reveals something of Stravinsky's basic religious beliefs (DD. p. 158): '.....the Englishmen's talk about religion seems abstract to him; but, then, he believes in the physical existence of the Devil, as people once believed in centaurs and mermaids.....' In the following paragraph ⁴Craft expands on this aspect of the composer's faith:

'He believed in the Devil Incarnate, and in a literal Hell, Purgatory, Paradise. At the same time, he was deeply superstitious, forever crossing himself and those around him, wearing sacred medals, and performing compulsive acts without which the auguries for the day were certain to be unfavourable. He believed in miracles, both large and of the Houdini sort and never questioned the provenance of any sacred relic. He venerated the Turin shroud, kept a photograph of it next to his studio desk, and, from the 1930's, collected writings about it, but not those accepting the statement in the Bishop of Troye's 1389 statement to the Pope that the forgers of the shroud had confessed. It goes without saying that dogmatism was another part of his religion, as it was of Stravinsky himself; that so many of the opinions of this least Socratic of men, in maieutic method, have appeared in the form of dialogues is ironic, even though the form was artificial and, in Stravinsky's mind, closer to Hebrew versicle and response than to Platonic question and answer'.

1 The substance of this paragraph is to be found in SPD. p.211.

2 *ibid.* footnote p.653. Referring earlier (p.349) to the American yearner Craft admitted that 'still another inconsistency was his attraction to the formalism of religions (as exemplified by his belief in the efficacy of ritual prayer and the rejection of the spontaneous, personal kind) versus his extremely rare attendance at religious services'.

3. *ibid.* p.470.

4. *ibid.* p.356.

Stravinsky sees faith and artistic creativity as inseparable:

'The more that one separates oneself from the canons of the Christian Church, the further one distances oneself from the truth. These canons are as true for musical composition as they are for the life of an individual....Inspiration is secret, occult.....The impulse that can come from a machine, from a drug, from any stimulus (is not inspiration but) something external.....The machine is a very beautiful form, but superficial, it could not directly inspire an art of any interest. Art is made of itself, and one cannot create upon a creation, even though we are ourselves graftings of Jesus Christ.....The overflowing of the framework in art testifies to a lack of internal discipline, which weakens the work....'

'Art postulates communion, and the artist has an imperative need to make others share the joy which he experiences himself'. 2

'.....the consummated work spreads abroad to be communicated and finally flows back towards its source. The cycle, then, is closed. And that is how music comes to reveal itself as a form of communion with our fellow men - and with the Supreme Being'. 3

So all-embracing was religion in Stravinsky's life that it seriously coloured his social and political outlook (though cynics may dispute the following sentiments in view of the composer's own life-style and shrewd business acumen):

'.....I am unable to accept materialism, as proclaimed by the surrealists and the communists, because my religion makes me a dualist, and, in the search for the beautiful, the fusion of material and spiritual is everything'. 4

Throughout his career such feelings kept him at odds with the social climate in his mother country.

'I know very little of the contemporary music of my country (Russia), but I believe that nothing great, or that nothing new, exists there..... Materialist philosophy is very remote from me, and it is for this reason that I have not been able to return to my homeland. It is not worthy of man to give his life for a material paradise.....I find myself very far removed from the oscillations of politics.... but I am anti-parliamentarian'. 5

And after re-visiting Russia and Lenin's mausoleum in 1962 he declared that 'the religion of Lenin is the opiate of the masses'(DD. p.285).

Most important to us is the way Stravinsky's spiritual state was

1 Interview in Le Vingtieme Siecle, Brussels, 22 May 1930.

2 CH. p.175.

3 PM. p.107.

4 Interview in La Noche, Barcelona 12 May 1936 (quoted in SPD. p.195)

5 Los Diarios, Buenos Aires 26 April 1936 (ibid.p.552).

reflected in his creative output. It caused the change in bias from vividly theatrical music to more hieratic, often austere, genres. Major critics freely acknowledge religion's significance here at the same time emphasising that Stravinsky never resorted to crude or sentimental pictorialism in the setting of religious texts.

'.....It is in his sacred music that his religious outlook is expressed in its purest and most explicit form with nothing of the mystic or the heterodox aesthete, but ready to see the characteristic traditions of the Eastern and Western Christian Churches brought together under the banner of catholic universality'. (Vlad p.153)

'Stravinsky is a man of profound religious faith. He observes rigorously the precepts of the Orthodox religion. He is a believer in the full sense of the term. His mysticism, in so far as it exists, is never exalted, ecstatic, or hysterical, and he never uses it for the outward expression in music of his religious faith...Stravinsky's attitude toward the mystery of the Divinity remains hidden in the very depths of his soul; it would never occur to him to display it in his everyday living, and even less so in his art...Stravinsky's religious music, then, should be considered as a sort of professional offering from a musician for the purpose of glorifying the Divinity, a sort of musical *ex voto*; yet it has no illustrative or literary relationship with the great order of things, it is not a transcendental and exalted transcription in sound by a mystic describing his vision.

Stravinsky's respect for and humility toward the Almighty remain too great for him to dare touch upon it by a realistic or imaginative conception.....'

(Alexandre Tansman: Igor Stravinsky, the Man and His Music, trans. Therese & Charles Bleeckfield, New York, 1949, p.129)

'Stravinsky in his religious music never wished to make art serve as a "confession of his subjective emotion". Rather, the "renunciation of all external charms makes us feel its real and authentic fervour"'. (Ernest Ansermet in Musical America No. 49, p.377)

In Conversations (CO.p.136) Robert Craft and the composer both make dramatic claims for sacred music past and present.

R.C. Your Mass, Canticum Sacrum and Threni are the strongest challenges in two hundred years to the decline of the Church as a musical institution.

IS.....How much poorer we are without the sacred musical services, without the Masses, the Passions, the round-the-calendar cantatas of the Protestants, the motets and Sacred Concerts, and Vespers and so many others. These are not merely defunct forms but parts of the musical spirit in disuse.

....When I call the nineteenth century "secular" I mean by it to distinguish between religious religious music and secular religious music.... Religious music without religion is almost always vulgar.....

R.C. Must one be a believer to compose in these forms?

IS. Certainly, and not merely a believer in "symbolic figures", but in the person of the Lord, the Person of the Devil, and the Miracles of the Church'.

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R.F. Goldman, writing on The New Mass ¹, suggested that 'it is, after all, the words and not the music that are always specifically religious; the music represents an attitude toward them....' Stravinsky is noted and notorious for his at times singular attitude towards the matching of text and music:

'When I work with words in music, my musical saliva is set in motion by the sounds and rhythms of the syllables, and "In the beginning was the word" is, for me, a literal, localized truth'. (DD. p.22)

'I wish to call the public's attention to a word which sums up a whole policy - the word "syllable"; and further to the verb "to syllabize". Here is my chief concern. In music (which is time and regulated tone, as distinct from the confused tone that exists in nature) there is always the syllable. Between the syllables and the general sense - or the mode permeating the work - there is the word, which canalizes the scattered thought and brings to a head the discursive sense. But the word does not help the musician. On the contrary, it is a cumbersome intermediate. (Quoted by Henry Boys, 'A Note on Stravinsky's Settings of English', The Score Vol.20, June 1957, p.14)

'Song, more and more bound to words, has finally become a sort of filler, thereby evidencing its decadence. From the moment song assumes as its calling the expression of the meaning of discourse, it leaves the realm of music and has nothing more in common with it'. (PM. p.59)

An ardent (and most knowledgeable) linguist and etymologist throughout his life Stravinsky not surprisingly has much to say on the choice and handling of languages and of translations. With Oedipus Rex (1926-27) he expressed a certain dissatisfaction with the vernacular, even, as in the following remarks, with the use of his native tongue.

'Much to the contrary of the traditional concept, which submits music to the psychological expressiveness, or to the dramatic significance of the word, in my Oedipus Rex the word is pure material, functioning musically like a block of marble or stone in a work of sculpture or architecture. Les Noces, in contrast, consists of songs, written in verse according to the

1 MQ. XXXV, July 1949, p.582.

Russian words. These do not make much logical sense, but, instead, follow an order suggested by their possibilities in rhythm and sound. Oedipus represents a great advance on this, for while the musical work that uses a living, contemporary language has many elements that evoke emotions and sentiments in us, the language destroys the value of the words as pure musical material. For this reason, the use of a dead language is justified, and I prefer Latin to Greek and Slavic because Latin is definitely fixed - as well as universal, thanks to its diffusion by the Church'.¹

'What a joy it is to compose music to a language of convention, almost of ritual, the very nature of which imposes a lofty dignity! One no longer feels dominated by the phrase, the literal meaning of the words..... (Stravinsky continues to stress the importance of the syllable.) Was not this method of treating the text that of the old masters of austere style? This, too, has for centuries been the Church's attitude towards music, and has prevented it from falling into sentimentalism, and consequently into individualism'. (CH. p.128)

This obvious sympathy with Latin did not mean that Stravinsky had no strong feelings about performances in other languages.

'The presentation of works in their original language is a sign of a rich culture in my opinion. And, musically speaking, Babel is a blessing'. (CO. p.50)

Stravinsky was attracted by the theme of Abraham and Isaac and by 'the Hebrew language as sound'. As in the case of the Latin in Oedipus Rex Stravinsky gives instructions that 'no translation of the Hebrew should ever be attempted as the syllables, both as accentuation and timbre, are a precisely fixed and principal element of the music'.² The composer advocated singing in the original language and providing audiences with translated libretti or synopses.

'An example of translation destroying text and music occurs in the latter part of my Renard (1915-16). The passage I am referring to - I call it "pribautki"³ - exploits a speed and an accentuation that are natural to Russian (each language has characteristic tempi which partly determine musical tempi and character). No translation of this passage can translate what I have done musically with the language. But there are many such instances in all of my Russian vocal music; I am so disturbed by them I prefer to hear those pieces in Russian or not at all. Fortunately Latin is still permitted to cross borders - at least no one has yet proposed to translate my Oedipus, my Psalms, my Canticum, and my Mass'. (CO. p.48)

C.F. Ramuz was involved in translating for Stravinsky using modern

¹ La Veu de Catalunya, Barcelona, March 1925, quoted in SPD. p.205.

² These comments, quoted in Vlad p.242, refer to Abraham and Isaac, a 'sacred ballad' for baritone and chamber orchestra (1964). Vlad further adds: 'In the letter quoted above, he (Stravinsky) says that the verbal and the musical accentuation coincide here - a very rare occurrence in his music'. ³ a droll, nonsense song, sometimes in part spoken.

languages and his experience offers us an insight into the technical processes of this composer's word-setting. Creating a French version of the Russian libretto of Renard....

'I had a sheet of paper and a pencil. Stravinsky would read me the Russian text verse by verse, taking care each time to count the number of syllables which I noted down on the margin of my sheet of paper and then made the translation - that is to say, Stravinsky translated the text for me word by word....Then there was the question of quantities (longs and shorts); vowels (one note was intended for an o, another for an a, a third for an i); finally, and above all, came the well known and insoluble problem of the tonic accent and its coincidence (or non-coincidence) with the musical accent'. 1

Stravinsky once noted how W.H. Auden 'seemed especially interested in my habit of translating syllables to note values before any real notes were composed'. 2 WW.(p.62) suggests that 'a comparison might be made between the calligraphic quality of some of Picasso's paintings and drawings and Stravinsky's strictly syllabic treatment of words in vocal settings. Stravinsky has defended his whole (to some, controversial) approach to word-setting with references to Beethoven, the composer he continued to admire right up to his death.

'Beethoven had already expressed them (views on the subject of music and words), in sum, in a letter to his publisher: "Music and words are one and the same thing". Words combined with music lose some of the rhythmic and sonorous relationships that obtained when they were words only; or, rather, they exchange these relationships for new ones - for, in fact, a new "music"!.....They no doubt mean the same things; but they are magical as well as meaningful and their magic is transformed when they are combined with music; I do not say that a composer may not try to preserve or imitate effects of purely verbal relationships in music. I have done precisely that myself, in instances where the verse form is strict or where the meter of the verse has suggested a musical construction to me (in the sonnet "Musick to Heare", 3 for instance). But this approach implies something of what is meant by the phrase "setting words to music", a limited, pejorative description that is certainly as far from Beethoven's meaning as it is from mine'. (MC. pp.74 - 5)

'But music's intransitiveness is also proven by the circumstance that "We may sing a tune without words, or a song where the notes are associated

1 C.F.Ramuz: Souvenirs sur Igor Stravinsky, 1929, quoted and translated by WW. p.57.

2 TC. p.289.

3 used in Three Songs from William Shakespeare (1953)

with words, but when we feel like singing, the notes will always seem the more important element".....And does the qualification, "when we feel like singing", not say, as I would say, that the words even of the 9th. symphony can be reduced to nonsense without affecting the meaning of the music?' (TC. p.290)

SACRED CHORAL WORKS

BEFORE 1950

THREE SACRED CHORUSES

The three choruses, Pater Noster, Credo and Ave Maria, cover the period 1926-1934 and the first of these was Stravinsky's first religious composition. The original words in each case were in Church Slavonic, but in March 1949 Stravinsky made new versions of each with Latin texts and some musical alterations noted below. The Slavonic version of the Credo was rewritten in May 1964. Robert Craft informs us that Stravinsky intended his three sacred choruses and his Mass to be 'liturgical and without ornament'.¹ This helps to explain certain features common to all three. All are written for unaccompanied S A T B voices in predominantly homophonic settings employing a syllabic treatment of the text.

Stravinsky further explains the background to these works (MC,p.152)

'I had returned to the Orthodox Church in 1926 (I became a communicant then for the first time since 1910 and composed my first religious work, an a cappella Pater Noster) (FOOTNOTE) I composed the Pater Noster and, later, an Ave Maria and a Credo, for use in the Russian Orthodox Church. In accordance with liturgical tradition, and in view of the Eastern Church flat prohibiting the use of musical instruments (even of pitch pipes), the music is a simple harmonic intonation of the words'.

In TC.(pp.40-1) he adds

'My Pater Noster, Credo, Ave Maria and the unfinished prayer "And the Cherubim...." were inspired out of antipathy to the bad music and worse singing in the Russian Church at Nice, where I became a communicant in 1925, the year before composing the Pater Noster. I knew very little about Russian Church music at that time (or now), but I hoped to find deeper roots than those of the Russian church composers who had merely tried to continue the Venetian (Galuppi) style from Bortniansky..... perhaps some early memories of church singing survive in the simple harmonic style that was my aim. All traditions of Russian Church singing are in decay now, in any case, which is why I rewrote the Credo in June 1964 (the original was composed on August 12, 1932), spelling out the faux bourdon. The Latin versions of the Pater Noster and Ave Maria date from March 1949. The Credo and Pater Noster are liturgical pieces, whereas the Ave Maria, though it occurs in several services, is a concert

¹ Stravinsky's Mass: A Notebook, in Edwin Corle's Igor Stravinsky, New York 1949, p.201.

piece. I composed the Ave Maria one Wednesday in Lent (April 4, 1934) but do not recall the first time I heard it. I do remember hearing the Pater Noster, however, sung by the Afonsky Choir at the Requiem for my sister-in-law, Ludmila Bellankin, in the spring of 1937, forty days after her death, according to Russian custom. This was in the Alexander Nevsky Church in the rue Daru (Paris), which played an important role in my life in the 1930's....I remained loyal to the Nevsky Church myself, which became the centre of the anti-Soviet church-in-exile'.

The first editions of these three works were published by the Edition Russe de Musique S. et N. Koussevitsky with the indication 'for the Divine Office'. Their brevity and respect for the a cappella tradition fits them for use in the Byzantine liturgy. The Latin versions of 1949, published by Boosey and Hawkes, would equally well serve Roman Catholic worship, as was Stravinsky's intention with the Mass of 1948.

PATER NOSTER

Composed 1926, first published (Edition Russe de Musique) 1932. Duration c. 1 min. 10 secs. Text: Lord's Prayer in Church Slavonic with phonetic English provided in Boosey and Hawkes edition.

The prayer is for unaccompanied four-voice mixed choir throughout and the short score edition (B. & H.) reveals no crossing of parts nor any break from strict homophony. Syllabic underlay is preserved save for three syllables enjoying two chords each. The composer provides no tempo or expression markings but a relatively slow rate of harmonic change implies speech rhythm chanting. The score is barred with a multiplicity of metre changes, including $\begin{smallmatrix} 2 & 5 & 3 & 6 & 7 \\ 4 & 8 & 4 & 8 & 8 \end{smallmatrix}$, which seem to serve as points of phrasing governed more by textual punctuation than by musical shape. Major phrase endings are marked by cadences (chiefly perfect and imperfect in the 'modern' C minor) with note-values increasing up to a minim. A crotchet pulse (MM. = 72 in 1949 Latin version) plus a feeling for consistent quaver motion would assist performing pace.

The melodic contour in all voice parts is restricted in range and shape. A limited chant-like inflection marks S, T and B, all three voices having the stepwise rising minor 3rd beginning in the soprano bars 1 - 6. (Alexandr Kestel'sky, who resurrected much znamenny chant in the 1890's,

frequently harmonised such material passing the chant from part to part.)

Conjunct motion dominates each voice, totally in the case of the sopranos.

No literal purpose is served by the melodic shape. Ranges:

S perf. 4th B flat - E flat
A min. 6th C - A flat
T dim. 5th A - E flat
B octave G - G

Harmonically a full four-part texture is maintained with well spaced chords in comfortable vocal ranges. There are no archaic bare 5ths and no chromatic movement of parts. Only the flattened 7th in the soprano part at full closes underlines the modal flavour and there is a marked absence of major 7th harmonies compared with later choral works. Only the tenors have to cope with raised 6th and 7th degrees of the scale, the B natural being followed three times by E flat as part of the tonic harmony. The majority of cadences feature a strong rising 4th in the bass part.

The text obviously demands through-composition but the whole work utilises repeats of four main phrases, each approximately four bars in length. "Deliver us from evil" re-uses the music at "as in heaven so in earth". The phrase for "hallowed be your name" is echoed twice immediately. Dynamic contrasts in performance might be implied by such repeats but such variation is not required by the text nor is it marked by the composer.

New version with Latin text (1949)

Published by Boosey & Hawkes.

This version contains 45 bars

compared with the 37 of the

original Slavonic setting. This is achieved by splitting the longer $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$ bars of the 1926 work, lengthening at least one cadence chord, stretching the central phrase "give us this day our daily bread" and adding a two-bar unison Amen. No dynamic marks are inserted but the metronome rate of $\text{♩} = 72$ is now given. Pitches and harmonies are essentially unaltered save for one cadential bass motif and the downward resolution of the alto dominant 7ths (making a unison 3rd with tenors compared with a rise to the 5th of the tonic chord in the 1926 version).

A new rhythmic feature of the Latin setting is the prominent syncopation ♪ ♩ ♪ entirely absent from the original music. Where this pattern occurs, for example on "vol - un - tas", it follows no natural word accent, merely the composer's own rhythmic penchant exploited in the similar chant-like phrases of the 1948 Mass (see the full sections of the latter's Gloria). Musical breath-marks help clarify the phrasing of the newer version.

(Note open score printing of this revised edition with the tenor line set to F clefs.)

CREDO

Composed 1932, first published (Edition Russe de Musique) 1933. Duration c. 3 mins.
Text: Credo of the Mass in Church Slavonic with phonetic English provided (B. & H.).

The original setting is a harmonised plainsong version of the Slavonic text for use in the Russian Orthodox liturgy. Like the Pater Noster it consistently features unaccompanied voices in four homophonic parts treating the text syllabically. The greater length of the text means longer portions of static monotone chanting, often on the root chord of A (major/Ionian) or with A in the bass underpinning a variety of upper voice harmonies. Speech-rhythms prevail with no notation of the above monotone examples except for the pitches of the sustained chord written inside double bar-lines. All other barring is omitted and no tempo or expression markings are included in the 1932 or 1949 editions. The choice of note values in these versions ranges from the sustained, flexible monotones to semiquavers and appears to be arbitrary so far as verbal accentuation and mood of text are concerned. There is, for example, no slackening of pace for the section beginning at "Crucifixus" nor acceleration at "et resurrexit". The same avoidance of obvious pictorialism is retained in the more precisely notated third edition (Slavonic) of 1964.

A wider range of pitches is occupied by each of the upper voices compared with the Pater Noster but the same emphasis on conjunct motion is found, especially in the soprano line. A notable feature is the frequent

use of what amounts to a tonic pedal in the basses, here given the most restricted of their parts in the three sacred choruses. The tessitura of the bass-line (principally low F sharp to C sharp a 5th higher) smacks of Russian Orthodoxy and the vocal timbres so well exploited in Rakhmaninov's Vespers of 1915. Coincidentally, the highest soprano reciting note (E) occurs at the words "and ascended into heaven". But the use of the same pitch for the subsequent phrase precludes any intention of word-painting. We should note the entry of all four voices for the opening phrase unlike the 1948 Mass which gives the usual Gregorian intonation to a sole priest, as befits Roman liturgy. Tiny three and four note melismas decorate the phrases "Son of God", "was buried" and "living and dead" affording minimal respite from the relentless syllabic chanting. Ranges:

S. dim. 7th F sharp - E
 A. octave C sharp - C sharp
 T. dim. 7th F sharp - E
 B. dim. 7th F sharp - E

The Credo is less conventional harmonically than the first of the sacred choruses for it shows a marked increase in the use of dissonance and a more rapid harmonic rhythm. As in the Pater Noster the four voice parts maintain an even spacing with no part crossing and few instances of unisons (the longest being the combined S and A parts at "born of the Father"). But the often static bass provides tension with the moving upper parts and some very strong 7th and 9th chords result, sometimes at monotone recitations. Examples include the 9th at "was crucified for us" and the major 7th at "and ascended". Such discords are normally approached comfortably by conjunct motion. By contrast to such tension many chords feature doubled notes, especially doubled major 3rds as at the opening, giving an archaic imbalance to the harmonies. Once again Stravinsky eschews predictable bare 5th chords. The strongest traditional cadences apart from the final full close in A (complete with doubled major 3rds in both chords) are perfect cadences in F sharp minor, including dominant 7ths

as at "invisible". In the 1949 Latin version such cadences cut across verbal phrase ends. "Light of light" begins on the strong F sharp minor chord which tonally ends the previous musical phrase. Such harmonic novelty needs to be treated carefully when assigning breathing points to singers and this may well be a clear illustration of Stravinsky's oft-quoted sentiment regarding the text as 'purely phonetic material for the composer. He can dissect it at will and concentrate all his attention on its primary constituent element the syllable' (CH. p.128).

No over-all form to the music is suggested by this traditionally extensive text and each of Stravinsky's versions of the Credo show no obvious repeated motifs or melodic shapes. No point of climax is implied by variations in tessitura, rhythmic pace or dynamic levels and we must assume a deliberate austerity on the composer's part in keeping with liturgical usage.

New version with Latin text (1949)

Published by Boosey & Hawkes.

This preserves the 1932 notation
but adapts the pointing and

phrasing to fit the new words. Note Stravinsky omits "Deum de Deo" in this version, though not in his 1948 Mass. ("Peccatorem" - p.7 - should read "peccatorum".) The only expression marks contained here are stress lines over occasional syllables, as with the opening syllable. An absence of breath marks must indicate for the performers reliance on the text's punctuation.

New version with Slavonic text (1964)

Published by Boosey & Hawkes.

'In May 1964 Stravinsky re-
wrote the Slavonic version of

this a cappella piece, mainly to fix the rhythms of the faux bourdon; but it was to some extent recomposed' (WW. p.374). This latest edition has very precise notation compared with its forerunners. Every syllable in

every voice part is notated musically. Breath marks and rests are inserted. Clear, though complex, barring is adopted (eg. $\frac{3}{8}$ 6 5 9 2 3+2+3), three types of accent employed (˘ ˙ >), Italianate expression marks and dynamics added, plus a metronome timing and a page of suggested phonetic renderings of the text. The speed of $\text{♩} = 140$ circa and the first marking of "Tutto molto metrico, non forte, non espress." tell us much about the manner of performance projected. The term "Discant" in place of soprano may follow his suggested use of boys' voices in the 1948 Mass, reflecting pre-1917 choral groups in Russian churches.

Among the elements of recomposition are an added melisma to the penultimate word and a curious rearrangement of the tenor part in the Amen taking it a perfect 4th below the range of the 1949 setting. The dynamic marks offer no sudden dramatisation of the text though the first forte is appropriately placed at the words "whose kingdom shall have no end".

Roman Vlad (p.154) offers the following references: 'Lindlar'¹ claims that in addition to being influenced by the classical models of the Russian Liturgy, the Credo is also linked with the early forms of accentus as defined by Vogelmaier in "Musica activae micrologus"(1517)¹. Accentus referred to syllabic rather than melismatic recitation of traditional plainsong.

AVE MARIA

Composed Apr.4, 1934, first published (Edition Russe de Musique) 1934. Duration c.1 min.
Text: Church Slavonic with phonetic English provided (B. & H.).

'This is not so much a chant as a four-part setting of a simple 4-note melody varied metrically in the style of Stravinsky's earlier Russian popular music. It is written in the mode of D Phrygian, though the altos occasionally modulate into the Aeolian mode by sharpening the 2nd of the scale (from E flat to E) when approaching the 3rd from below' (WW. p.388).

1 'Igor Stravinsky's Sakraler Gesang', Regensburg, 1957.

. . . . final 4 bars, 1934 edition.

This work represents the only non-liturgical piece among the three sacred choruses and it is also the freest setting with more melismatic underlay of the words than hitherto. However, a strict homophonic deployment of the S A T B voices is retained save for occasional passing-notes and auxiliaries. The original version sets the Russian equivalent of a Lento tempo marking and a crotchet pulse is suggested by the $\frac{2}{4} \frac{3}{4} \frac{4}{4}$ barring within which harmonic change is frequently in quavers. The newer 1949 edition gives = 72 in place of the direction "slow".

Melodically all four parts seem more mobile than in the other two choruses despite the restricted ranges. There is virtually no monotone repetition of chords or individual parts. Some outlining of chord shapes can be seen in the 1934 work though stepwise motion still dominates the lines, especially (this time) the bass. S, A and B parts show a relatively low tessitura and there are no real climaxes in the melodic contours...Only the alto line has accidentals (qv. Ex. 5).

Ranges: S dim. 5th F sharp - C
 A min. 6th B - G
 T octave E - E
 B maj. 6th G - E

Chords are evenly spaced as in the other choruses and the low tessitura makes the 7th chords mild in impact. Such dissonances are normally approached and quitted by step being frequently created as appoggiaturas or accented passing-notes. Stranger is the degree of parallel motion between parts compared with the writing in the Pater Noster


and Credo. The first two bars have tenors and basses in consecutive octaves and parallel 3rds, 5ths and 6ths pepper the score. The scalar bass line also mollifies the two main cadences, which mirror each other in bars 7 and 20.

Repetition of motifs, like the above cadences, is a further feature of this music. Though not demanded by the text small cells are repeated within the same voice parts. Examples include bars 5 - 7 repeated 10 - 12 and again as 14 - 16 in all four lines, and bars 1 - 3 reappearing as 8 - 9, again in all parts. No dynamic marks govern these features.

New version with Latin text (1949)

Published by Boosey & Hawkes.

In this second edition the original
is transposed up a whole tone

(to E Phrygian) and extended from 20 to 35 bars. The latter includes a final Amen on a chord of A major and extensive melismas much longer than the simple decorations of the 1934 music. All the voices enter with a six-note elaboration of the first syllable. The music of this opening phrase, "Ave Maria. . . . Dominus tecum", is repeated substantially for "Sancta Maria. . . . pro nobis".  appears in each of the three lower parts as a new ornamental figure and a much simplified barring (now mainly $\frac{3}{4}$ with occasional $\frac{2}{4}$ bars) helps the flow of what is beginning to look more like a polyphonic texture. Parts have more rhythmic independence even than in the first 1934 version, though the Latin syllables, like the Slavonic, are still synchronised in all four voices. The tenor part is once more printed on a bass staff and no dynamic markings are added.

William Dehning¹ states that 'the distrust of the choral instrument

¹ A study and Performance of Mass and Cantata by Igor Stravinsky, D.M.A. dissert., U. of S. California, 1971, p.35.

which Stravinsky displays.....was undoubtedly very real at the time he composed the three liturgical choruses. A glance at the simple harmonic and melodic structure of any one of these pieces will bear out that distrust. Had he written his Mass at the time he originally intended, it might have turned out far less sophisticated than it did'. Indeed, we see great restraint in the use of the voices in these three choruses despite the experiences of Zvezdoliki, The Wedding, Oedipus Rex and the Symphony of Psalms, all completed before 1934. We see:

- i) narrow vocal ranges and limited tessitura
- i) absence of real ornamentation
- iii) " " polyphonic complexity
- iv) " " solo voices
- v) " " divisions
- vi) " " unisons or other groupings.

But we must remember that homophony and syllabic word treatment also dominate the earliest of the accompanied choral works, Zvezdoliki and The Wedding. In the latter block-chord chanting deliberately created a ritualistic effect, such textures being the stuff of 17th and 18th century Russian church music. This explains most fully the style of the three sacred choruses. Their restraint was demanded by liturgical propriety summed up by Vlad (p.154):

'If a musical composition is to meet the requirements of the liturgy, it must of necessity be inspired by an absolute and dogmatic faith; and in the light of this faith all the impulses of the spirit, all the upheavals and torments of the emotions must be calmed down, resolved and sublimated into the devout and serene contemplation of the divine mystery'.

SYMPHONY OF PSALMS

Text: Vulgate Psalms 38,39,150. For SATB voices - 'the choir should contain children's voices, which may be replaced by female voices (soprano & alto) if a children's choir is not available' (note in score) - and orchestra (5.5.0.4.-4.5.3.1 - timp.,bass dm.,hp., 2 pianos, 'cellos,double basses).

Duration c.23mins. The score also notes

that 'the three parts of this symphony are to be played without a break' and the 'words.....should be sung in Latin'. Dedication: 'Cette symphonie composée à la gloire de DIEU est dédiée au "Boston Symphony Orchestra" à l'occasion du cinquantenaire de son existence'. Composed at Nice and Charavines between January and August 15, 1930. Published by Edition Russe de Musique, 1930 (later by Boosey & Hawkes, including the composer's new revision of 1948). First performed Dec. 13, 1930, Société Philharmonique de Bruxelles, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, conductor Ernest Ansermet. First performed in America Dec.19, 1930 by Boston Symphony Orchestra in Boston, conductor Serge Koussevitzky. The programme for the first Brussels performance carried sub-titles for the three movements: I Prelude, II Double Fugue, III Allegro symphonique. These headings, given by Stravinsky himself in a letter to Ansermet dated 3 Sep.1930, are not reproduced in the scores.

WW. (p.360) states that at 'the end of 1929 Stravinsky was commissioned by Koussevitzky, the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, to write a symphonic work to celebrate the Orchestra's fiftieth anniversary in 1930. He was given a free hand regarding form and specification'.¹ In the event his insistence on a choral work omitting the largest sections of the standard symphonic ensemble the violins and violas (together with the 'romantic' sounds of the clarinets) must have seemed ill-fitting to the terms of the commission. But the symphony has remained a highly rated work among all the composer's output and in the repertory of twentieth century choral music.

Wilfrid Mellers suggests² that 'superficially, the form of the work resembles that of a baroque concerto-cantata in three movements: prelude-toccata, double-fugue and finale'. Stravinsky certainly felt that

1 On Sept.14, 1929 Stravinsky wrote to G.G.Païchadze, Paris director from 1926-46 of Koussevitzky's Editions Russes de Musique: 'Symphony for Boston: I have decided to accept this proposition and ask you to establish a contract with Boston so that I can sign it as soon as possible. The payment should be half on the signing of the contract, the other half on the delivery of the material, in all 6,000 dollars'. (Quoted in SPD. p.294)

2 Tempo No.97, Summer 1971, p.19.

Movement 1 (78 bars)

Text: Psalm 38, vv.13 - 14 Vulgate
(Psalm 39, vv.12 - 13 Authorised
version)

Exaudi orationem meam, Domine, et deprecationem meam. Auribus percipe lacrimas meas. Ne sileas. Quoniam advena ego. sum apud te et peregrinus, sicut omnes patres mei. Remitte mihi, ut refrigerer priusquam abeam et amplius non ero.

(Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.)

This suppliant prelude to the whole work was written 'in a state of religious and musical ebullience' (DD. p.45). Indeed a certain restlessness pervades the instrumental background to the somewhat solemn choral effects. A florid, arpeggio-based opening for orchestra abruptly changes character for the first choral entry at bar 26 where the restraint of ancient chant is evident in the unison alto line of two notes a semitone apart. A four-bar phrase for flutes and oboes precedes a second alto chant which begins at bar 41. From here to the end of the movement the text unfolds in continuous choral writing. Only two pairs of words are repeated, 'Ne sileas' (tenors, bars 49-52) and 'Remitte mihi' (all voices, bars 66-71), and no obvious musical form is dictated by the psalm verses. Stravinsky unifies the movement by a four-fold reference to the two-note chant (altos 26-32 and 41-47, tenors 68-71, sopranos 72-74) and by emphasis on chordal patterns in the orchestral parts. The latter help to establish the interval of a 3rd as a motif underlying the whole work and a clear instance of this is seen in oboes II and IV accompanying the first vocal entry. Their opening three notes (transposed) foreshadow the instrumental fugue subject of the second movement.

The impact of the choral writing is cumulative, from the gentle economy of the single alto line at the outset via staggered entries of all four voices from bars 53-57 to the massive block-chord reiterations of

'Remitte mihi' ('spare me') in bars 66-7. The first homophonic phrase follows the initial alto entry and consists of four bars of strict chordal movement over a pedal bass. Bars 49ff. feature a monotone tenor line reinforced at the octave by sopranos in the repeat of 'ne sileas'. The polyphony begins with altos and basses paired in octaves to the words 'Quoniam advena' followed subsequently by sopranos and finally tenors. No imitation is employed and this gradual thickening of texture is matched by a build-up of orchestral sound. Paired voices, altos and tenors in harmony, begin the final passage which, after separate soprano and bass entries, settles to regular homophony from 'priusquam' to the end. The final three words also feature parallel motion of all four voices in octaves and a 5th. Despite some exploitation of the higher ranges of each voice part Stravinsky manages to maintain well spaced harmonies most of the time. Parallel octaves separate sopranos and tenors (bars 50-2), altos and bass (53-6) and S T B (75 - end). The basses cross the tenor line by a semitone (!) in bar 58 and the altos rise above the sopranos in 59 - 60. Where parts do come close together the resulting harmonies frequently include minor 2nd/major 7th discords. There is no division of the SATB texture.

Throughout the movement the choral writing is characterised by a steady measured pace in contrast to the greater activity of the instruments. The only note values used for the voices are J J O against ♪ ♪ ♪ in the accompaniment. Shifting time signatures (from 2/4 to 3/2) do not alter the $\text{J} = 92$ pulse common throughout and no Italian tempo markings are used in this movement. The 1948 edition does give breathing marks in both choral and orchestral parts to show precise ends of phrases, such as bars 52, 67 and 76 (voices only).

The chant-like character of the opening two-note phrase for altos has been noted and much of the restraint of the choral music in general here is

reminiscent of the style of the 1926 Pater Noster. The latter was notable for limited vocal ranges and predominantly stepwise melodic motion. The Symphony begins with just such restraint but during this first movement

widens the vocal ranges: S dim. 11th E - A flat

A perf. 11th B - E

T perf. octave G - G

B min. 10th B - D

and produces considerable angularity in certain voice parts. The bass line between bars 60-64 is tortuous especially when producing semitonal clashes with the tenors and exploiting horizontal major 7ths. Soprano and alto lines are similarly wide ranging in the central section. Thrusting all voices into their high registers fortissimo produces the striking climax at bar 65 - the dynamic peak of the movement. Bars 61-2 (altos) and 63-4 (tenors) are brief instances of chromatic colouring. All entries relate easily to previous vocal or instrumental harmonies so that only the bass line following bar 53 presents any problems of intonation (and dynamic balance where exposed high notes are concerned). The text is set syllabically for the most part with no attempt at literal interpretation save, perhaps, for the marcato monotone pleading of all four voices at 'Remitte mihil.

There is a certain preference for bare fifth harmonies at the tutti vocal peaks such as bars 33, 36, 66 and 75 - end. In the final chord the oboes and brass provide the missing 3rd. Elsewhere Stravinsky indulges in his typical semitonal clashes between combined voices (viz. the creation of major 7th/minor 9th discords between pairs of voices). Sopranos and tenors oscillate between notes a semitone apart to maintain just such discords in bars 70-74, resolving into an octave at the end of 74. A splendid control of harmonic rhythm can be seen in the gradual increase of dissonance over a pedal-point from bars 33 to 36, the whole phrase arched between bare 5ths on G. It is a feature of the chord changes that frequently at least

one note is held over between chords, usually being retained in the same voice part:

Ex. 6

The musical score for Ex. 6 shows four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time. The Soprano part begins with a circled '56' in the first measure. The music is characterized by a Phrygian mode, with a strong E note in the soprano part. The basses have leaps above the staff in bars 60-65.

Dynamic balance between all four voices is maintained by generally open spacing of parts and only the basses' leaps above the staff in bars 60-65 will need special care. From the opening chord and its subsequent repeats which punctuate the toccata-like instrumental prelude, plus the two-note chant which dominates the choral sound, there is a strong Phrygian orientation (centred on E). The final G (major) chord then serves as a pivot into the C minor opening of Movement 2.

In terms of pace, range, texture and dynamics there is a marked contrast throughout the first movement between the choral and orchestral sound. Baroque elaboration of the opening wind parts heralds a renaissance-like choral texture. Both alto chants are doubled by oboes, the second at the octave as well as in unison. Oboes, reinforced by flutes and horns, also duplicate the alto and soprano lines and some of the lower voice parts between bars 60 and 65, this dynamic climax being supported also by the D trumpet doubling the sopranos' G's. Characteristics of the articulation in the 1948 Mass are foreshadowed in the contrasting markings evident in much of the symphony. Cant. or ben cant. are supplied for all the choral entries except 'Ne sileas' and 'Remitte mihi'. But against ben cant. at bar 53 the winds are marked stacc. e ben marc. and leggiero ma marcato. Très court and staccatissimo are then indicated for the bassoon and trombone entries respectively. Significantly a solo 'cello plus first horn introducing the initial choral chant at bars 18ff. are labelled cant. and cant.espressivo respectively thus fixing the character of the main vocal motif. But when

that motif enters at bar 26 one oboe and one bassoon are set in staccato contrast to the smoother line of their colleagues. The Kyrie movement of the Mass displays similar distinctions in vocal and instrumental articulations (qv.p.107). The only pronounced vocal marcato is reserved for 'Remitte mihi' hammered out in block chords in bars 66-7. In this passage, as elsewhere, a fairly high tessitura is employed for all four voices enabling the choral sound to balance that of the accompaniment. However, some adjustment of the final choral dynamic (f) must be made if the orchestral markings (ff and fff) in bar 77 are to be taken literally. The 1948 miniature score omits dynamic markings for all but cor anglais and bassoons at bar 53. The voices should here follow the instrumental dynamics noting the oboes' forte at bar 60 and the crescendo for all performers ending ff at bar 65.

Movement 2 (88 bars)

Text: Psalm 39, vv.2,3,4 Vulgate
 (Psalm 40, vv.1,2,3 Authorised Version)
 Expectans expectavi DOMINUM, et intendit
 mihi. Et exaudivit preces meas: et eduxit
 me de lacu miseriae, et de luto faecis. Et
 statuit super petram pedes mōes: et direxit
 gressus meos. Et immisit in os meum canticum
 novum, carmen DEO nostro. Videbunt multi et
 timebunt: et sperabunt in DOMINO.

(I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.)

Stravinsky (DD.p.45):

'The "waiting for the Lord" Psalm makes the most overt use of musical symbolism in any of my music before The Flood The (fugue) subject was developed from the sequence of 3rds. used as an ostinato in the first movement. The next and higher stage of the upside-down pyramid (of fugues) is the human fugue, which does not begin without instrumental help for the reason that I modified the structure as I composed and decided to overlap instruments and voices to give the material more development; but the human choir is heard a cappella after that. The human fugue also represents a higher level in the architectural symbolism by the fact that it expands into the bass register. 1 The third stage, the upside-down foundation, unites the two fugues'.

The form of this movement was clearly determined by Stravinsky's psychological response to the text rather than by any literal shape to the psalm. The first two sentences form the material for the principal vocal fugue (bars 29 - 52), the third sentence occupies a stretto (52 - 60) and the final two sentences the continuous homophony from bar 71 to the end. There is no repetition of the verbal phrases. In addition to the 28-bar orchestral fugue which begins the movement there is a brief interlude for instruments without voices (bars 61 - 69) treating the opening of that fugue in stretto and thus balancing the choral stretto which is without instruments. Both fugues are presented in four 'voices' though the

1 The instrumental fugue having been restricted to treble range only.

orchestral opening confines these to upper range instruments. Despite the composer's view of the role of the instrumental ensemble expressed in 1935 (qv.p.43 above) he was later critical of his own writing in this movement.

'And Isn't the fugal exposition in the second movement of the Symphony of Psalms altogether too obvious, too regular and too long?' ¹

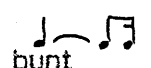
Stravinsky observes strict 'classical' fugal practice in having tonic and dominant points of imitation for the singers at the outset. The voices enter in descending order (tonic - dominant - tonic - dominant) with 'real' answers of the subject's first four bars. The tenors and basses extend the polyphony from bar 46 (where sopranos and altos stop together) to 52 (where the sopranos begin the stretto). Wilfrid Mellers ² observes the significance of the words of the stretto, 'set my feet upon a rock and established my goings', which enjoy no orchestral support at all. In this central passage the complete four-bar fugal subject is only given to the sopranos who again lead the subsequent entries in descending order, pitched on F, B flat, E flat, A flat respectively. The altos only succeed in presenting the subject's first four notes. All the stretto (maestrale) leads from major 2nd intervals with the preceding voice:

Ex.7

1 ED. p.109.

2 op cit. p.25.

The concluding homophonic texture from bar 71 features octave doublings in a number of places - ST 71-3, AB 71-4, SATB 72-3, SAB 76, ST 78-80, SAB 81-2 and SATB 84-end. There are no instances of part-crossing. Throughout, a legato vocal line suits the continuous polyphonic textures and the substantial homophony at the end calls for none of the brusque marcato effects of the first movement. Stravinsky places > accent marks over the first two notes of the fugue subject on each of its appearances but otherwise offers tranquillo in bar 29 as the only indication of performing manner.

Breath marks indicate an abrupt weak-beat stop for the tutti chorus at bar 60 to be followed by the re-entry of the instruments for their stretto passage. Another precisely notated cut-off for full chorus and orchestra is bar 83: . On the next beat the unison chorus continue accompanied by the instrumental fugue motif in bass strings and muted D trumpet, all subito p after the fortissimo at bar 83. This unison ending repeats the word 'superabunt' shifting the verbal accent by means of syncopation and then adding point to the conclusion not by inserting a rallentando but by detaching the last two chords from the preceding by another breath mark between the syllables of 'DO - MINO'. Such rhythmic freedom, echoing the 1926 Pater Noster and Oedipus Rex and fore-shadowing the 1948 Mass, derives both from primitive chanting and from the composer's own principle of syllables as sound sources not governing musical accents (qv. Introduction p. 5 ff.). The choral writing throughout movement 2 is completely free from metre changes, 4/8 prevailing at the steady metronome rate of ♩ = 60.

At bars 52-3 sopranos followed by basses have a syncopated variant of the main fugue subject while preserving the harmonically strong first interval of a perfect 4th. Though this interval dominates the polyphonic sections it disappears in the homophony from 71 onwards. Here Stravinsky tends to re-use the chromatic inflexion of the original subject plus the

interval of a minor 6th:

Example 8 is a musical score for a soprano part. It begins with a tempo marking 'mf tranquillo'. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of several measures, including a chromatic descent. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in a syllabic style: 'Ex-pec - tans ex-pec - ta — vi DO - MI - NUM'. A circled number '29' is placed at the start of the first syllable 'Ex'. The example is labeled 'Ex. 8' on the right side.

The latter becomes major and is inverted in, for example, the soprano line bars 72, 75 and bass line bar 75. Chromaticism marks the soprano phrase put into sequence between bars 78 - 83. In all voice parts the melodic profile favours a medium-high register especially in the homophonic section.

Ranges: S maj. 9th G flat - A flat
 A aug. 9th D flat - E
 T maj. 7th A flat - G
 B perf. 11th A flat - D flat

The textual underlay is syllabic save for the curiously baroque ornamentation of the bass line at bar 51's cadence.

The fugal exposition for the orchestra is firmly centred on C minor. The vocal fugue, however, establishes E flat minor accompanied by the Instruments' own fugal theme transposed. The voices' final unison E flat is supported by flutes, oboes and D trumpet sustaining superimposed 4ths and 5ths over a root E Flat. Unlike a similar chord concluding the later Mass there is here a 3rd inserted - the G natural of the first movement ending now serving as a pivot to the final movement. In general, the vocal harmonies of the purely homophonic passages are less complex than the dissonant polyphony of the fugal portions. Octave doublings in the former simplify the harmonic texture. Voice-leading problems in the earlier sections may diminish with concentration on horizontal pitching. A difficult entry is that of the sopranos on a piano high F at the start of the stretto. The immediate instrumental sound, on low strings and bass trombone, is unhelpful so that the high voices must relate their new pitch to the direction of the preceding tenor and bass vocal lines. The massive unison B flat at bar 71, not difficult if the accompanying G minor harmony is anticipated during the strings' pedal

G in bars 66-9, can be undermined by the simultaneous C minor orientation of the solo oboe and tenor trombone parts in the same preceding bars. Conductors must make their choruses aware of any such polytonal implications and in cases of extreme uncertainty adjust the dynamic balance or even stage positioning of crucial instruments.

The only obvious case of instruments doubling voices is the pairing of divisi 'cellos with the tenors and basses in bars 47-8. Elsewhere the demands of the contrapuntal texture lead to a transparent orchestration which reserves the full orchestral tutti for 'Videbunt multi'(bar.78ff.). Here octave doublings are employed in the voice parts and we see again a generally high tessitura being selected. This, together with matched dynamic markings, means a satisfactory preservation of dynamic balance between choir and orchestra throughout. Where both fugue subjects are presented at the same time (eg. bars 29ff.) the listener should be made aware of this and balance adjusted if necessary. The same care affects voice leading as noted above.

Movement 3 (212 bars)

Text: Psalm 150 complete, Vulgate and
Authorised Version.

Alleluia. Laudate DOMINUM in sanctis Eius.
Laudate Eum in firmamento virtutis Eius.
Laudate DOMINUM, Laudate Eum in virtutibus
Eius. Laudate DOMINUM in virtutibus Eius.
Laudate DOMINUM in sanctis Eius. Laudate
Eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis
Eius. Laudate Eum in sono tubae. Laudate
eum.

Alleluia. Laudate DOMINUM, laudate Eum.
Laudate DOMINUM - - Laudate Eum. Laudate
DOMINUM. Laudate Eum.

Laudate Eum in timpano et choro, Laudate
Eum in cordis et organo. Laudate Eum in
cymbalis, bene sonantibus, laudate Eum in
cymbalis jubilationibus. Laudate DOMINUM.
Laudate Eum omnis spiritus laudet DOMINUM,
omnis spiritus laudet Eum. Alleluia.
Laudate DOMINUM. (Underlined phrases
repeated)

(Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of his power. Praise Him for his mighty acts: praise Him according to his excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.)

This longest movement of the symphony takes its shape partly from that of the psalm text and partly from the composer's natural feeling for arch-like symmetry and a remarkably dramatic response to the words set.

This he describes in DD. (p.46):

'The rest of the slow tempo Introduction (to movement 3), the Laudate Dominum, was originally composed to the words of the Gospodi Pomiluy. This section is a prayer to the Russian image of the infant Christ with orb and sceptre. I decided to end the work with this music also, as an apotheosis of the sort that had become a pattern in my music since the epithalamium at the end of Les Noces. The allegro in Psalm 150 was inspired by a vision of Elijah's chariot climbing the Heavens; never before had I written anything quite so literal as the triplets for horns and piano to suggest the horses and chariot. The final hymn of praise must be thought of as issuing from the skies, and agitation is followed by "the calm of praise"'.

Repetition is inherent in the text of Psalm 150 with its verse by verse invocation to 'praise him' (Laudate). This word is set in the following bars or phrases commencing at these points:

4ff. 12ff. 20 53ff. 65 72ff. 104 114-15 121 126-7

132-3 150ff. 163 175 207

The general style of these choral utterances reflects the degree of structural repetition in the movement as well as the over-all character of the music.

Bar	4	gentle <u>ostinato</u>
	12	
	20	
	207	
<hr/>		
	53	sop./alto chant
<hr/>		
	65	<u>staccato</u> chords
	114-15	
	121	
	126-7	
	132-3	
<hr/>		
	72	lengthy, white-note polyphony (accompanied by Instruments' ' <u>Laudate</u> ' rhythm from bars 24ff.)
<hr/>		
	104	TB accented monotones
	175	
<hr/>		
	150	<u>cantabile</u> polyphony - dance-like character, pictorial?
<hr/>		
	163	hymnic <u>ostinato</u>
<hr/>		

It is significant that the chordal 'Laudate DOMINUM' rhythmic motif first appears in the instruments alone at bar 24 (bassoons and horn) as part of a substantial orchestral interlude during which Elijah's chariot crosses the scene for the first time in bars 40ff. The soprano and alto chant then separates this material from the chorus's first use of the staccato chords at 65 where the motif becomes anacrusic. A more precise vocal version of bar 24 commences at 114ff. and forms here a repeat of that earlier orchestral interlude, now combined with voices and leading once again to the equestrian triplets (cp. bars 126-31 with 40-45).

The most dramatic and literal repeat is of the opening choral 'Alleluia', heard in bars 2-3, 102-3 and 205-6 as discreet, symmetrical pillars of the whole movement. The central Alleluia is the most daring,

presenting, with its prior wind chords, a sharp contrast in pace and dynamic level to the preceding section. WW. comments (p.364) that 'although musically the passage is very slight (only five bars long), its effect is to maintain unimpaired the feeling of humility set forth at the beginning of the movement, and never really forgotten, despite all the brassy excitements that have intervened. It gives the movement a real centre of gravity - something the composer had tried to do in the first movement of his Capriccio the previous year without real success'.

The movement clearly contrasts lengthy sections of legato singing (eg. 'ben cantabile' 163 - 198) with abrupt staccato effects (especially bar 114 and subsequent entries). However, more use is made here of gradual dynamic change - always crescendi - unlike later pieces of comparable length, such as the Credo of the 1948 Mass which employs terraced dynamics. The choral texture also preserves the variety seen in the symphony's first two movements. Homophony is used at all tempi but the more open polyphony is reserved for the slower passages or else is provided with lengthened note-values. Between bars 53 and 98 we see the principal contrasts in pace and texture. This whole section has the movement's quickest metronome marking of $\text{♩} = 80$ set off by the bassoon and horn staccato chord motif at bar 24. The alto and bass voices take up this motif in crisp quaver octaves at bar 65. But either side of this passage legato polyphony prevails, first in the soprano and alto chant and at bars 72ff. a white-note section reminiscent of bars 53ff. in the first movement where similar note-values and wide intervals (5ths, 6ths and octaves) are used. In both movements the Italian marking is ben cent. Then at bar 80 in the finale the basses are joined by a more angular duet of altos and tenors in octaves and marked poco sf e sub p (and sempre sim.). Octave pairings are typical of the choral texture in this movement:

eg.	SB	bars	7 - 11
	TB		12 - 22/207 - 211
	AT		80 - 86
	SB		166 - 168/190- 192

Bars 107-9 provide a full choral unison heralded by three bars of tenors and basses in octaves. At 150ff. the only imitative polyphony of the movement is shared by all four voices entering in the orders S - B - A+T. and leading thence to the psalm's concluding verses which, from bar 163 to the end, are treated in four-part homophony save for two brief insertions of tenor and bass passages in octaves. Nowhere does the SATB texture divide and part-crossings are few and brief (TB 83, 85, 166-67, 190-1; AS 157; AT 157, 158, 161, 162). It is perhaps the simplicity of the choral scoring (reduction of real parts by octave doublings and carefully placed unisons like that ending the movement), added to hypnotic ostinati, which enhances the ritualistic flavour of the finale and of the whole symphony.

'Rigorosamente' is set alongside the penultimate metronome mark ($\text{♩} = 72$) in the third movement - a stern reminder to performers of the composer's traditional concern for precise timing and, in this work, his penchant for supra-human, clockwork ostinati. These follow the ritual patterns already familiar in The Rite of Spring and The Wedding. However, Stravinsky did allow himself a change of heart regarding speeds in this final psalm, for the 1948 edition revised the tempo markings here. The composer's own misgivings are expressed in DD. p.44ff.: 'At first, and until I understood that God must not be praised in fast, forte music, no matter how often the text specifies "loud", I thought of the final hymn in a too-rapid pulsation'. The original markings at bars 146ff. (Rallentando in 1930 score) have become more precisely Meno mosso, $\text{♩} = 60$, but the chief emendation occurs at 163. In 1930 this section maintained unaltered the $\text{♩} = 48$ tempo of bars 150ff. This is now the $\text{♩} = 72$, rigorosamente coda. '.....in his last years as a conductor of his own works, Stravinsky took the hymn (bars 163ff.) much slower than marked.....'(Wilfrid Mellers¹). The complete list of metronome rates for

[†] W.Mellers, op cit. p.26.

This movement as given in the 1948 revision are:

♩ = 48	bar	1
♩ = 80		24
♩ = 48		99
♩ = 80		104
♩ = 60		147
♩ = 48		150
♩ = 72		163
♩ = 48		205

Metre changes in the main occupy only single isolated bars and involve conversion from duple to triple beats or vice versa (eg. 2/2 3/2 2/2, bars 70-2, 75-7, 81-3 or 4/4 2/4 3/4 4/4 bars 138-41). But Stravinsky also offers conducting suggestions in the 1948 score: 'In 4' at bar 24, 'In 2' at bar 52, where the metre changes specifically from 4/4 to 2/2. Additional markings include breath marks at various points throughout the movement. These can include simple cut-offs, as at bar 128, or more idiosyncratic phrasings such as bars 87ff.:

Ex. 9

f ben marc.

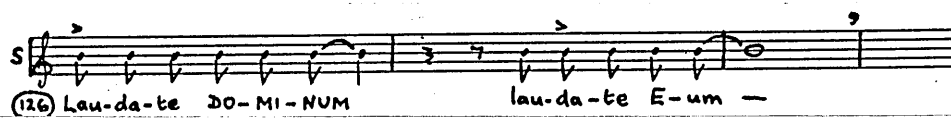
(87) Lau-da — te E — um — in so — (ho) — no tu — (hu) — bae

The whole portion beginning at bar 80 exploits syncopation, movement in the alto and tenor parts being always on the second beat of each 2/2 bar. Then at bar 87 these same voices establish a cantus firmus of semibreves (three statements of the same four-bar unit) pitched a minor 6th apart against which the sopranos and basses move in parallel rhythms emphasising the same syncopated character. Bars 107-9 and 163-6 create hemiola effects in the voice parts.

Stravinsky's very personal mode of word-setting is here, as elsewhere in his choral output, the most significant rhythmic feature of his writing for voices.¹ It is clearly demonstrated in this last movement by the changing

1 'What I can say is that in setting the words of this final hymn, I cared above all for the sounds of the syllables, and I have indulged my besetting pleasure of regulating prosody in my own way. I really do tire of people pointing out that Dominum is one word and that its meaning is obscured the way I respire it, like the Allelujah in the Sermon, which has reminded everybody of the Psalms. Do such people know nothing about word-splitting in early polyphonic music?' (DD. p.46).

accentuation of the oft-repeated word 'Laudate'. Bars 126 and 127 juxtapose two versions:

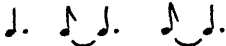


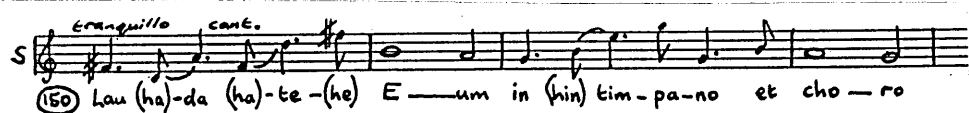
Ex. 10

The stressed first syllable version is used when preceding the word 'DOMINUM' in bars 114 - 133. But these words receive an anacrusic treatment by altos and tenors both at bar 65 and at 68:


Ex. 11



(The horns initial presentation of this staccato motif at bar 24 is of the accented kind.) Ex.11 above also illustrates syllable separation by rests (qv. Stravinsky's own comment in the footnote above). The latter refers to the controversial breath mark splitting the syllables of the final 'DOMINUM' in bar 210. Aspirates are precisely indicated in the vocal parts: 'so - (ho) - no tu - (hu) - bae' at 91ff. in soprano and bass lines and 'Lau - (ha) - da - (ha) - te - (he) Eum in - (hin) timpano/cordis' for soprano and bass at bars 150ff. In the latter the phrase marks curiously link pairs of notes sung to different syllables: .



Ex. 12

rather than the expected  etc. However, the addition of accent marks to each quaver makes clear the appoggiatura-like musical effect intended. In general, as in the first movement, the choral parts are rhythmically restrained with a pronounced use of hymnic white-notes in contrast to more ornamental orchestral writing, notably Elijah's triplet quaver chariot with accompanying flourishes of an even more rapid nature.

Restraint marks many of the melodic profiles seen here. The

limited range and quasi-chant-like character of the soprano line at 53ff. recalls the altos' entry in movement I with their semitone plaint widened to a whole tone. From 87 to 98 the sopranos maintain an oscillating major 3rd for twelve bars and the lengthier ostinato which occupies bars 163-174 and again 187-198 confines the same voices within the space of a minor 3rd. Nicolas Nabokov reveals ¹ the origin of the D flats and naturals at bars 166-67ff. He and Stravinsky worked in studios overlooking the Russian Church in Paris where they both heard the soprano section of the choir making the mistake of rising a half-step instead of a whole tone. Stravinsky thought this 'wonderful' and immediately penned the above passage where sopranos and basses move in parallel octaves. Chromaticism colours the bass part at bars 83-4 and this is preceded by a somewhat angular solo bass line originating at 72. 5ths, 6ths and (minor) 7ths characterise this and the alto/tenor duet which joins the basses at 80. In fact, the symphony mixes chant-like restraint reminiscent of the 1926 Pater Noster with mobility in individual lines which expands their ranges progressively throughout the three movements. So the finale gives us the

following ranges:	S dim.	12th	C sharp	- G
	A min.	13th	G	- E flat
	T min.	13th	C	- A flat
	B perf.	12th	G	- D

This increased compass of individual parts is well illustrated by the imitative polyphony (triadic in melodic outline) occupying bars 150 - 162. The sopranos here cover their full gamut by means of a scalar ascent to a climax in pitch and volume, then followed 'p subito' by the ostinato hymn. All of this contrasts markedly with the totally monotone utterances of the staccato bassoon and horn motif which the voices first take up at 65. In this bar the pitch follows that of the previous choral line but later detached

1 B.B.C. Radio 3 talk, May 28, 1977.

and harmonised versions must be tuned from the surrounding instrumental parts. This is not always easy (eg. at bar 132 where the previous 'chariot' interlude offers few sustained instrumental pitches) and conductors must guide singers' ears to the most helpful orchestral timbres. The altos must also take care in tuning their G's beginning each 'Alleluia' for only in the third and last version does an oboe double them at the octave. The same general absence of melisma persists in the word-setting here as in the other two movements.

C minor/major tonality prevails in this movement with considerable chromatic decoration in the prominent orchestral interludes. As in the later Mass the instrumental bass line tends to remain independent of the vocal bass part. The movement's opening two chords also provide a curious foretaste of the 1948 work, where the Agnus Dei begins with similar chords over a sustained bass C. The later work merely adds dissonances to a basic C major-F major progression. The symphony substitutes C Minor linking it with the close of movement 2. A magical harmonic transition is attained at bar 150. After a polytonal bar superimposing chords of F major and F sharp major the chorus breaks in with the 'dominant of the dominant', that is a chord of D major underpinned by a G major triad repeated as a bass ostinato. Though beyond the scope of the present discussion it must be noted that the preponderance of accompanying ostinati throughout this movement produces colourful harmonic effects because of Stravinsky's penchant for superimposing ostinato phrases of differing lengths shifting in and out of phase.

The almost hypnotic orchestral ostinati also contribute to this movement's, indeed the whole work's, hieratic quality. 163ff. features a pendulum-like bass line on timpani, harp and two pianos whose four-beat repeated phrase supports a three-beat pattern for sopranos. Another important ostinato accompaniment is provided at 14 - 20. The instrumental

ostinato figure of four crotchets covers five octaves (flutes to double basses and piano) and accompanies a tenor and bass pattern of three minims and a two-note horn chant reflecting that of the voices in movements 1 and 2:



It is the first horn which doubles the beginning of the sopranos' chant at 53 and all the staccato renderings of 'Laudate DOMINUM' are reinforced by the orchestra: 'cellos with AT at 65-71, horns with TB 104-8 and subsequent repeats of the text. There is some doubling of the sopranos by the first oboe 150-56 and complete doubling by flutes and oboes 157-62. The lower voices are supported by three 'cello lines at 163-74 and 187-98 but each instrument crosses from voice to voice, never slavishly doubling a single vocal line. The fullest and most complex orchestral textures appear in the two Important interludes at 24 - 51 and 134 - 146 and supporting the choir especially at 87 - 98. Elsewhere tutti forces are not allowed to compete with the voices. But care is still needed over dynamic balance where Stravinsky's markings are not consistent. He is precise for example at 53ff. where sopranos' 'cant. non f' is matched by horns' 'cantabile mf'. But no initial orchestral dynamic is provided at 72ff. other than 'sempre poco sfp'. At 150ff. no vocal dynamic is supplied, only the indication 'tranquillo cant'. At 157 'cant., ma non f' governs the alto and tenor entries and from there to the movement's dynamic peak at bar 162 choir and accompaniment share identical markings. The crescendo from 183 to 186 is also shared but with the composer's reservation 'ma non troppo' applied just to timpani, harps and pianos.

The most notable feature of the orchestral contribution to the setting of Psalm 150 is the avoidance of obvious pictorial effects. The 'sound of the trumpet' is contained within a general orchestral tutti but

there are no cymbals to be heard nor even imitated, theirs being a most gentle passage (the ostinato hymn commencing at 163). By contrast we have Stravinsky's own acknowledgement above of the 'literal' basis for the significant orchestral interludes. And WW. (p.365) sees in the rich harmonisation of the concluding bars ('at one point.....no fewer than ten independent parts') something akin to a halo surrounding the sopranos' swaying melody 'like a nimbus'.

do not share the motif, but it becomes very important in the choral lines of Psalm 150. The initial tenor and bass 'Laudate' in the third movement overlaps a major with a minor 3rd, bars 87 - 98 fix the sopranos on a major 3rd and the ostinato hymn commencing at 163 confines the sopranos within a minor 3rd. The accompanying bass ostinato between 65 and 71 further exploits the same interval. Such motivic integration together with the requirement that the three movements follow each other without break underline Stravinsky's total and original concept of the work's structure, fully independent of any Classical symphonic form. His own subtitles of 1930 (qv.p.42 above) reinforce Mellers' feeling for the general plan of the work (also p.42). This plan is dominated by the multi-sectional 'Allegro symphonique' whose varied pace, dynamics and over-all character are partly determined by the text and partly, Vlad suggests (p.155), by a broader, psychological concept of the whole work. 'Before the hymn-like grandeur of the finale we get dramatic Invocation, fervent prayer, and anguished questioning, contrary to Tansman's assertion ¹..... that with Stravinsky "music ends where prayer begins!"'

The Symphony is indeed a substantial prayer. In the flyleaf of his sketchbook for the work Stravinsky pasted a drawing of the Crucifixion inscribed 'Adveniat Regnum Tuum'. In such a spirit he must first have approached the task of selecting his three texts which make a remarkably progressive whole. The psalms are prayerful - no biblical narrative eliciting dramatic pictorialism in the music. We have noted Stravinsky's usual avoidance of detailed word-painting, especially in the commonly evocative Psalm 150. But it is in that final movement where the composer declares a particularly subtle response to the text (qv. p.54 above) which

¹ Alexander Tansman, Igor Stravinsky: the Man and his Music, New York, 1949, p.129.

itself offers dramatic contrasts.

Both Walter White and Roman Vlad feel a strong Byzantine flavour to this composition, despite the composer's denied intentions quoted above. 'A Byzantine basilica would seem to be the ideal setting for this music, as it floats slowly upwards towards the figure of the Pancrator dimly discernible at the apex of the dome' (WW. p.365 regarding the finale's coda). Also describing the ending Vlad (p.161) uses the words 'hieratic Byzantine grandeur'. Hieratic elements throughout the work must surely include the often sustained, organ-like wind-band accompaniment, the ritualistic 'bell-chords' punctuating movement I (bars 1, 4, 8, 14, 48, 52), the mesmeric ostinati of both voices and instruments, the strong polyphonic texture of Psalm 40 and the chant-like profiles of individual vocal lines. Ritualistic punctuation, like that of a choral sanctus-bell, is suggested in the three somewhat detached appearances of the word Alleluia in the finale.

The composer's first concept of the medium for the work is described in DD. p.46 confirming the fact that ideas for this composition were forming before the Koussevitzky commission:

'My first sound-image was of an all-male chorus and "orchestre d'harmonie". I thought, for a moment, of the organ, but I dislike the organ's legato sostenuto and its blur of octaves, as well as the fact that the monster never breathes. The breathing of wind instruments is one of their primary attractions for me. I obtained a satisfactory all-male chorus only once, to my recollection, and that was in Barcelona with the "Orfeo Catala", whose 200 little boys, with their mamas and relatives, almost filled the hall. I was careful to keep the treble parts within the powers of child choristers'.

The same choral demands were to be sought in the 1948 Mess. also accompanied by winds. The instrumental combination was heralded by the opera Mavra (1922) employing winds, 'cellos and basses. The Symphonies of Wind Instruments (1920), the wind Octet (1923) and the Concerto for piano and winds with basses and percussion (1924) all demonstrate the composer's preferred timbres in the decade leading to the Symphony. In the latter the most characteristic colour in the accompaniment is that of

the two pianos used in the first and last movements. They frequently provide a ritualistic bell-like resonance which may remind the listener of The Wedding. In shunning the upper strings we may begin to conclude that Stravinsky deliberately seeks a straighter tone, freed from romantic vibrato and more akin to both baroque performance practice (an influence on his so-called neo-classical phase which includes the Symphony) and to the tone of the organ, so representative of religious music in Western Europe. The omission of the clarinets may be seen as a further move to reduce any hint of romantic lushness – all of which should serve as a stylistic clue to the choral conductor. Similar ritualistic timbres support so many of Stravinsky's sacred choral works that the Symphony of Psalms becomes a prototype for this genre of composition. The request for children's (boys?) voices for the upper parts means an intentional straight-toned vocal sound comparable to the required orchestral specification. But thin tone is certainly not appropriate to the voices, as witness the many indications 'cant.' and 'ben cant.' and the gradual crescendi and one diminuendo (movement 2) added to the choral parts (unusual in Stravinsky's choral writings). Varieties of articulation have also been noted in the analyses of the separate movements. Therefore the character of choral performance to be aimed for is strictly composer-directed rather than the self-indulgent manner normally accepted for nineteenth century oratorio.

Among previous choral pieces we must acknowledge the influence of the 1926 Pater Noster and Oedipus Rex, completed in 1927. A rising inflection of a minor 3rd was noted in the soprano, tenor and bass parts of the 1926 work, further evidence of that interval's importance, and the generally restricted lines of the earlier piece point towards passages like 68 – end of movement 1 and 163ff. in the finale of the Symphony. We have seen the composer himself drawing attention to the similarity between Psalm 150's staccato rhythm (movement 3, bar 24) and a solo for Jocasta

in Oedipus Rex (Fig.103ff. in the latter). The symphony's finale also links up with the earlier work in the famous triplet episodes for the orchestra. The first of these (40ff.) recalls Oedipus and Jocasta's duet at Fig.124 whilst the common-chord horn fanfare at bars 134ff. is directly reminiscent of the trumpet solo which bursts in on the same duet one bar before Fig.126. The shifting accents of the oft-repeated 'Laudate' are well matched by the varied treatment of 'Oedipus' in the opening and concluding choruses of the opera-oratorio. Above all, in the Symphony Stravinsky uses Latin which became the universal language of most of his major sacred choral pieces. It was Oedipus which crystallised his views on language and he chose there '.....a medium not dead but turned to stone and so monumentalised as to have become immune from all vulgarization'.¹

The Symphony of Psalms is Stravinsky's first accompanied sacred work. Its treatment of the orchestra looks ahead (both the Canticum Sacrum of 1955 and the 'Vom Himmel hoch' variations of 1956 omit violins and clarinets from their instrumentation), yet the choral sound is still steeped in the primitive a cappella music of traditional Orthodox liturgy. The vocal material is relatively sparse in quantity considering the important orchestral introductions and interludes contained in a work of little more than twenty minutes duration. Then, compared with the instrumental writing, the choral textures are simpler (no divisions and no use of solo singers) moving at a generally slower pace (that is, employing longer note-values than the accompaniment). Melismatic word treatment is absent save for bars 57-8 in movement 1 and bar 79 in movement 2, and the restricted melodies in chant-style have already been described. The work's legacy to Stravinsky's future choral style involves his persistently

¹ CH. p.125.

idiosyncratic word-rhythms, a widening of individual vocal ranges and a greater variety of vocal articulations. The changing accentuation of 'Laudate' in Psalm 150 has been cited as an obvious example of the composer's apparently arbitrary word-rhythms¹ and the use of syn-copation, often at slow tempo (movement 3, bars 175-182), again gives a strong feeling of free chant. Over-all vocal ranges, as below, considerably extend those of the earlier Pater Noster:

S	dim.	13th	C	sharp	-	A	flat
A	maj.	13th	G		-	E	
T	min.	13th	C		-	A	flat
B	perf.	12th	G		-	D	

Monotone and restricted range chanting survive from the past but the symphony adds the following variations in the use of the chorus:

- i) unisons
- ii) groupings of 2/3 choral parts
- iii) imitative polyphony
- iv) staccato chording
- v) extension of disjunct motion in individual lines
- vi) chromatic colouring of lines

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Varlants between editions.

WW. (p.366) first compares a piano reduction of the Symphony of Psalms, made by Stravinsky's son Sviatoslav and published by Edition Russe in 1930, with a full score published by Edition Russe in 1932. The latter excises two quavers from bar 36 in movement 1, alters the harp and piano figuration in bar 50 and the interlinked 3rds of woodwind and harp at 68. Various misprints and omissions in the full score are corrected by the 1948 revised edition. David Drew² points out a re-scoring of the cor anglais part in movement 1 at bars 33ff. and 41ff. and a rare case of 'changed

* In DD. p.31 Stravinsky spoke about the handling of the text in Oedipus Rex: '.....Latin is a language of fixed accents and I accentuate freely according to my musical dictates'.

2 D. Drew, 'Stravinsky's Revisions', The Score, Vol. 20, June 1957, p.50.

phrasing' revealed in the two versions of the opening phrases (un-specified). WW. also points out the lightening of the woodwind texture by deleting doubled notes at bar 26 and 41 of the first movement. At 71ff. in the second movement new parts for three trombones and tuba in the 1948 version replace an earlier tuba part. The important tempi revisions affecting movement 3 are given on page 58 above.

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Being neither a liturgical piece nor an oratorio the Symphony of Psalms occupies a major place in twentieth century sacred concert music. (Goffredo Petrassi set Psalm 9 with a Latin text for chorus, strings, brass, two pianos and percussion in 1934-6!). Though richly orchestrated it makes only modest demands on the chorus. For the listener it offers a universal message in Stravinsky's most direct, often lyrical, manner in sharp contrast to more ascetic later works for similar forces. Indeed it presents a summary of musical language both ancient (in the choral chanting) and more recently Romantic (in its chromaticism). 'The work's universality and modernity comes from the interplay of contradictory elements' thinks Wilfrid Mellers.¹ This mixture of historical associations has helped fan the flames of Soviet criticism of the composer. Tikhon Khrennikov, secretary of the Soviet Composers' Union, seeing the Symphony as the culmination of Stravinsky's neo-classical/baroque phase, calls it a work 'in which there are stridently combined the old Bachian devices of polyphonic writing with the ear-splitting "contemporary harmonies"'.² Francis Poulenc, however, had no reservations:

1 W. Mellers, op cit. p.27.

2 Original text in Sovietskaya Muzyka, 1948, No.1. Quoted in MG, July 1962, p.349.

'.....Stravinsky has never deceived us, but rarely, also, has he offered such a beautiful surprise What is particularly to my taste in this new masterpiece is the absence of grandiloquence.....It is a work of peace..... One can only marvel at Stravinsky's powers of renewal. I salute you, Jean-Sebastian Stravinsky'. 1

Artistic reserve, even detachment, seems to be the subject of the following comment by Stravinsky's former colleague Ernest Ansermet in which he seems to underplay the composer's personal involvement with the spirit of the piece. (The conductor is quoted in WW. p.366.)

'As Stravinsky, in response to some form of inner compulsion, does not make of his music an act of self-expression, his religious music can reveal only a kind of 'made-up' religiosity. The Symphony of Psalms, for instance, expresses the religiosity of others - of the imaginary choir of which the actual singing choir is an analogon: but it must be agreed that the expression of this religiosity is itself absolutely authentic'. 2

In 1962, while questioning the genuineness of the composer's complete sacred music output Paul Henry Lang still singled out this work as a favourable exception - 'In the Symphony of Psalms Mr. Stravinsky surrendered himself with captivating awareness to the spirit of love he feels at the heart of life, a unique case in all his work'. 3 The present writer also feels that the Symphony reveals a greater warmth of religious feeling than most of the other, seemingly more clinical, sacred works and Wilfrid Mellers, unequivocal in his praise, is clearly looking forward when he describes what this piece shows of its maker's outlook on religion:

'That work, which is certainly among the two or three supreme masterpieces of the 20th century, is a revelation of God's love because the creator attains, in the last movement, to the love of God. In comparison, Stravinsky's later works seem to be in love with the idea of God, rather than with God Himself.....' 4

1 F. Poulenc, Le Mois, Feb.-Mar. 1931.

2 Original text in Fondements de la Musique dans la Conscience Humaine, Neuchâtel, 1961.

3 MQ. July 1962, p.371.

4 Mellers, 'Stravinsky's Oedipus as 20th Century Hero', MQ. July 1962, p.311.

MASS

Text: Ordinary of Roman Catholic Mass (5 sections) in Latin. For S.A.T.B. voices (with divisions and children's voices requested for S.A. parts designated "discanti" and "alti") and double wind quintet (2 obs., cor angl., 2 fags., 2 tpts., 2 ten. trbs., 1 bass trb.). Duration c. 17 mins. Kyrie and Gloria were finished in 1944, the other movements following in 1947. The score was completed on 15 Mar. 1948. Published by Boosey & Hawkes, 1948. First performed 27 Oct. 1948 by La Scala chorus and orchestra in Milan, conductor Ernest Ansermet. First liturgical performance 8 Dec. 1949 by U.C.L.A. A Cappella Chorus with organ accompaniment at St. Joseph's R.C. church, Los Angeles, conductor Roger Wagner.

MC. p.50 quotes a letter dated 25/11/14 in which Diaghilev declared that

'.....what I have in mind is a performance of the MASS in six or seven short tableaux. The epoch will be Byzantine, which Mestrovic¹ will arrange in his own way. The music should be a series of a cappella sacred choruses, inspired, perhaps, by Gregorian chant, but more of that later!'

The 1948 work is a natural successor to the three sacred choruses in matters of style and projected usage.² All share a pronounced homophonic choral style treating the text syllabically and, like the Pater Noster and Credo, the Mass is intended for liturgical performance - this time in the Roman Catholic church. Roman Vlad (p.154) suggests that in 1926 Stravinsky intended to compose a Mass for the Russian church in which he was then a communicant. The Orthodox proscription of instruments postponed and altered his final essay in the form. Its liturgical motivation can be seen from the text, the compact musical length of seventeen minutes, the printed Gregorian Intonation for the priest at the beginning of the Credo and possibly the desire for all-male choirs implied in the request for children's treble and alto voices. Unlike the earlier Symphony of Psalms

1 Yugoslav sculptor and designer.

2 William W. Austin: '.....the severe little liturgical choruses..... pointed more surely than the Symphony of Psalms toward the Mass'. (Music in the Twentieth Century, W.W.Norton, New York, 1966, p.335).

and later choral pieces the Mass was not a commissioned work.

Stravinsky himself explains what prompted its composition (ED. p.76):

'Why, then, did I compose a Roman Catholic Mass? Because I wanted my MASS to be used liturgically, an outright impossibility so far as the Russian church was concerned, as Orthodox tradition proscribes musical instruments in its services.....My MASS was partly provoked by some Masses of Mozart that I found in a second-hand music store in Los Angeles in 1942 or '43. As I played through these rococo-operatic sweets-of-sin I knew I had to write a Mass of my own, but a real one. Incidentally, I heard Machaut's MASS for the first time a year after mine was composed, and I was not influenced in my MASS by any "old" music, whatever, or guided by any example'.

Despite this disclaimer there are many 'old' features evident in Stravinsky's work and a number of critics have drawn attention to these. In Lang's Stravinsky: A New Appraisal of His Work ¹ Wilfrid Mellers, commenting on the period of the Mass (1948) and Cantata (1952), considered that 'Stravinsky started from medieval texts and consciously borrowed medieval techniques such as the non-harmonic nodal ostinato and the 'pre-ordained, doctrinal serialism' of medieval composers'. Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt suggests that 'Die Messe ist ein gegenstück zu den polyphonen Kirchenmusiken der französischen und flamischen Meister im 15. Jahrhundert'. ² Stephen Walsh ³ sees evidence of medievalism in the dry wind accompaniments, organum-like consecutives and the use of melisma, still rare at that point in Stravinsky's career. To these features Dehning ⁴ adds plagal cadences, small melodic cells and 'closed forms', shifting rhythmic and accentual organization, organum-like structures in the Gloria, psalmodic response elements in the same movement and chant-like flourishes opening the Sanctus. The latter clearly refers to the antique flavour of the triplet/quintuplet ornaments of the solo vocal entries,

¹ New York, 1963, p.45.

² Stravinsky und sein Jahrhundert, Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1957, p.44.

³ op cit. p.46.

⁴ op cit. p.32.

notably unaccompanied and preceding the full choral response with a bare 4th. Similar decoration colours the solo instruments and voices beginning the Gloria. Ingolf Dahl ¹ compares Stravinsky with Machaut in

- i) the 'non-expressive' quality of Stravinsky's work
- ii) melodic outlines in Gloria and Credo which 'parallel' (but do not copy) plainchant
- iii) the strictly organized syllabification according to an unvarying metrical unit in the Credo, reminiscent of the medieval tactus.


Even Robert Craft ² writes that the integration of voices and instruments in the Mass 'reminds one of the fourteenth century work of Machaut' and that, for example, the 'recurring discord on crucifixus was a tradition with Machaut'. ³ Craft also adds that the music is 'close in spirit and form to the Mass of the great Dufay, in harmonic practices, in his chord spacings, in the cutting of phrases, and even in so specific a stylism as the continuous alternation of major and minor 3rds'.

Stravinsky again adopts a relatively restrained choral style in the treatment of both the choral unit and individual vocal lines. Homophonic textures dominate though there is greater rhythmic freedom, especially in ornamenting single parts, than was the case in the Three Sacred Choruses. The Credo is the most severely restrained movement in terms of choral groupings, with a rigid adherence to syllabic word-setting in a strict 'familiar' style. Stravinsky was clearly conscious of the extra length of the Creed text compared with that of the other movements. Apart from the use of soloists (normally from the choir's ranks) in the Gloria and Sanctus, re-groupings of the choral forces are most obvious in the Kyrie movement (bars 16-21), the Amen concluding the Credo and the paired entries of each phrase in the Agnus Dei. Individual vocal lines retain a

1 Stravinsky's Mass, Notes Vol.6, 1949, pp.490-91.

2 Stravinsky's Mass: A Notebook (in Corle, ed. Igor Stravinsky, 1949, p.100).

3 Dehning comments that the 7th harmonies which Stravinsky uses in consecutive chords at fig.32ff. were only used as passing discords in Machaut (op cit. p.31).

comfortable tessitura with non-angular parts conceived linearly. There are some pronouncedly chant-like phrases in which monotone treble lines supported homophonically are reminiscent both of Stravinsky's own earlier liturgical pieces and of Russian Orthodox music of pre-revolutionary days (see Chapter Two). These phrases include the Gloria bars 59-65, the Credo bars 124-141 and the Sanctus bars 64-end. Verbal rhythms are treated with typically Stravinskian freedom. Random examples might include the word Hosanna (cross-accentuation), the Credo bars 50-2 (hemiola), the Gloria bars 21, 23, 25ff. (syncopation), the  setting of the word 'Sanctus' (neo-baroque rhythmic ornament) and the final Agnus Dei phrase (time-signature changes). Greater use of melisma than hitherto will be noted in discussion of the separate movements. But in keeping with the total restraint of the work no musical devices are exploited for the purpose of word-painting. Such literalism is especially eschewed in the longest movement where even dynamic variation is severely limited. The work's first conductor, Ernest Ansermet, summed up Stravinsky's attitude to the words of the Mass: 'He has one sole objective: to make of the text itself a chant and to bring it into musical form'.¹

The instrumental combination supporting the singers and dividing into five brass and five woodwind instruments is less unusual to the composer than it is to earlier musicians setting the traditional text although a notable forerunner is Bruckner's Mass in E minor for double choir and fifteen wind instruments composed in 1866. Winds and voices, often in antiphonal contrast, were an outstanding feature of the early baroque work of, for example, Giovanni Gabrieli. Antiphony in Stravinsky's Mass includes the three reiterations of Sanctus with chorus versus trombones and the regular alternation of voices and instruments throughout the

1 'Stravinsky's Newest Work,' Tempo No. 10, 1948-49, p.6.

Agnus movement. Trombones in particular had ritualistic significance right up to Mozart's Masonic music. Mozart's own penchant for wind ensembles complements that composer's indirect influence on the writing of the Mass already acknowledged by Stravinsky. However, the latter found natural expression through the use of winds, with or without string basses. Prior to 1948 came

Symphonies of Wind Instruments (1920) wind ensemble
Mavra (1922) opera with winds, 'cellos, basses
Octet (1923) wind ensemble
Concerto for piano and winds (1924) with basses and percs.
Symphony of Psalms (1930) chorus with winds, 'cellos, basses.

The Cantata of 1952 is supported by a chamber group of four wind instruments and 'cello.

There is little soloistic instrumental work in the Mass other than the introduction to the Gloria. The ensemble forms a unity with rhythmic emphasis mainly from the woodwind and harmonic underpinning from the brass. Organ-like chordal textures dominate the wind parts though the instrumental writing reflects the percussive nature of much of the composer's music rather than the sustained tones of church organ accompaniments. Stravinsky himself was not happy about the transference of wind sonorities to the organ in the first liturgical performance (see p. 107). It is regrettable that no organ version has come from the composer. In 1903 the MOTO PROPRIO of the Roman church advised that 'only in special cases.....will it be permissible to admit wind instruments, limited in number, judiciously used and proportioned to the size of the place' - a vital factor in the effective performance of the 1948 Mass. Craft¹ feels that

'the orchestra which Stravinsky says "tunes" his choir never plays quite the same music. It adds tones, sounds different root tones than appear in the vocal parts, stresses, underlines, imitates, counterpoints, sets off and

¹ op cit. p.206.

augments the chorus.....the instrumentation is remarkable in the way it supports without doubling, often weaving lines distinct from the choir as the trombone fragments in the Credo (bars 30-33)¹.

An obvious balance of form marks this work. Of five movements the middle one is longest, numbers 2 and 4 use solo vocal writing, and numbers 1 and 5 employ more prominent instrumental matter. A further summary of the movements follows (after Dehning) dealing with tonality/modality, word setting, choral texture and instrumental character.

KYRIE	GLORIA	CREDO	SANCTUS	AGNUS
tonal	Dorian	Phrygian	Dorian	tonal
syllabic	melismatic	syllabic	melismatic	syllabic
imitative	homophonic	homophonic	parallelism	canonic
full orchestration	embellishing orchestra	sparse orch.	embellishing orchestra	full orchestration.

Kyrie (52 bars)

The three-part text, Kyrie - Christe - Kyrie eleison, does not bring forth a simple ABA musical structure. Material from one section overlaps into the next.

For example, the staccato repetitions of Christe eleison bars 22ff. lend their character to the start of the second Kyrie section. The most notable structural detail is the repeat of the opening choral bars at the end. Even here the cadence is altered and the orchestral parts elaborated the second time with appropriate rests in the voice parts to expose the accompaniment.

The composer's word repetitions mark this opening movement. The paired words 'Kyrie eleison' are given to each voice a total of three times at the outset, but 'Christe eleison' repeats each word separately - 'Christe' legato and 'eleison' to reiterated staccato chords. The final word 'Kyrie' has multiple repetitions, 'eleison' just three. In the central section the

music of bars 22-3 is immediately and exactly repeated as 24-5, such rapid repetition of short musical cells being common in this Mass.

Another recurring feature of the first movement is the use of the bell-like E flat in the upper instrumental parts (for example, bars 1,6,10,48,50).

The opening Kyrie statement is in two sections of four bars each, mainly homophonic. Christe eleison is in two sections employing choral imitation, the second section being based on the staccato instrumental material preceding it. The final Kyrie has four sections: 1) an instrumental interlude derived from the final Christe section, 2) and 3) choral statements also based on the later Christe music, 4) a repeat of the initial Kyrie.

The over-all form in broad outline becomes:

bars 1 - 9	10 - 25	26 - 52
<u>A B</u>	<u>C D</u>	<u>DI A</u>
Kyrie	Christe	Kyrie

We should note the increasing lengths of each successive portion.

The predominant choral texture is homophonic S A T B, except bars 35-41 being SSAATB and bars 44-47 having S and A in unison. Paired voices, always S A versus T B, produce variety with obvious antiphonal effect at bars 22ff. and 34ff., and contrasting pace at bars 7-9. A most striking change of texture is produced by the imitative entries of the word 'Christe' in the order S A B T, bars 16-21. The traditional spacing of entries by 4ths and 5ths is observed here and the total effect heightened by having the legato vocal lines supported by a persistent staccato accompaniment. The choral parts are comfortably spaced throughout with no crossings other than T and B bars 9 and 42. In both the homophonic and polyphonic passages there is a judicious mixture of similar and contrary motion, though the opening bar (repeated at 49) is characterised by the oblique movement of the basses against all three upper voices.

A crotchet pulse (= 66) is maintained but metre changes (eg. 4/4 3/4 2/4) mark bars 22 to the end. Even more idiosyncratic is the cross-accentuation of syllables. Note the varieties of treatment of the one word 'eleison':

- 1) e - lei - son bars 3, 22, 23, 24, 25, 46
- 2) e - le - i - son 3, 5, 8, 9
- 3) e - - lei - son 14, 15, 41, 52

Bar 3 presents two different articulations simultaneously. Syllable accents are most variable in the second Kyrie section bars 34 - 42, especially noting the musical similarity between the two phrases here (34-38, 39-42). Only word accent points up the difference. In performance it is most effective when no artificial verbal or musical stress is indulged in but the three syllables KY - RI - E treated evenly in this passage.

Small intervals prevail in the melodic writing with a good deal of stepwise motion and some chromaticism (basses bars 14-15, tenors' cadences bars 5, 23, 25, 46). Tritones appear in the opening bars for tenors (bars 2-3) and trebles (bar 4). The imitative writing at bars 16ff. is given a certain baroque strength not only by the pitch relationships between entries but also by the use of an initial octave leap followed by a diatonic scale. Each of the four voices shares in this polyphonic material. Elsewhere shared melodic and rhythmic motifs are presented together by paired voices in harmony (for example, the second group of Kyries). In the latter case we may note a brief sample of Stravinsky's device of heterophony, the 1st trebles and 2nd altos having a near identical melodic profile in octaves during bars 35-42. The two Kyrie sections and the second part of the Christe passage have predominantly syllabic textual underlay, whereas the first settings of Christe represent in their melismatic treatment a considerable advance over Stravinsky's earlier sacred choral works.

Ranges: S	min. 9th	D - E flat
A	min. 9th	A - B flat
T	maj. 9th	D - E
B	maj. 10th	G - B

The movement's flow is aided by the weakness of the cadences at

phrase-endings, weakened by

- a) use of $\frac{6}{4}$ chord, eg. bar 5
- b) added note(s) blurring tonality, especially 7ths., eg. bars 15, 42
- c) cadence on weak beat, eg. bar 25
- d) change of orchestration at cadence, eg. bar 22
- e) stepwise approaches to all cadences
- f) following sections being closely related, often by a 3rd.
- g) enharmonic change, eg. bars 25-26
- h) omission of 3rd of chord, bar 21 (instruments).

Cross-relations, especially creating major/minor ambiguities, are a feature of the harmony here, for example bars 23-25, 37. Tuning in such passages, as in the usual Stravinskian 7th chords (bars 4-5), is normally aided by the stepwise movement of parts. More difficult might seem the voice leading in bars such as 11 - 12. But here the instrumental pedal-points tune in the second pair of voices.

There is only one unaccompanied passage in this movement at bars 4-5, though the first choral entry is only supported by a solitary bass trombone. The instruments themselves have an 8-bar interlude from bar 26 based on their own staccato material as at bar 16. Contrast in articulation seems to be a prime function of the accompanying group here. A percussive, bell-like character with short note-values often performed staccato set the instruments off against the tranquillo¹ chorus parts. Perhaps for this reason it is the bright woodwinds which predominate though the marcato bassoon triplets in bars 7-9 are rarely audible. Nowhere is the full ensemble used tutti. There is, however, a progressive increase in the density of the accompanying parts towards the concluding phrases of the movement. This matches the fuller choral texture in the

1 With the piano dynamic this is Stravinsky's only expression mark (both in bar 2) in the choral score.

later Kyries.

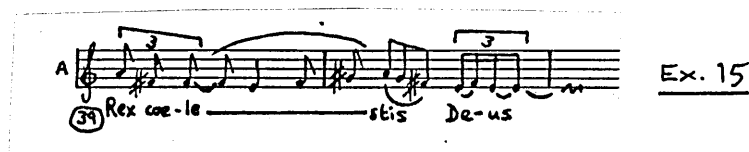
Gloria (88 bars)

In answer to a question regarding the musical restraint of the Gloria Stravinsky replied: 'In this movement we are entering into the presence of God, and must be humble in His presence. Before Him we are nothing'.¹ Compared with traditionally festive Gloria settings this is indeed reserved. Solo rather than choral voices dominate the music and each full choir entry is marked piano. It is here also that we begin to feel more clearly the archaic flavour of the Mass. Ansermet² felt that '.....the Gloria and the Sanctus reveal a distant Byzantine strain'. Francis Routh describes how 'the "solo" and "full" antiphony of the Gloria and Sanctus are an application of the responsorial singing of Gregorian psalms, which was Jewish in origin'.³ Dehning presents the same assessment noting precisely how this ancient format governs Stravinsky's layout of the movement. 'The similarity to responsorial psalmodic chant is obvious and is followed exactly.

Rehearsal number 10 13 15 19 20 21 22

'Chant-Response' C R C R C-R C-R C-R (Amen)'.⁴

For specific examples of archaic detail we may examine the solo voice parts. Ornamentation, especially the triplet mordent and the opening rising appoggiatura, colours the first solo entry. Organum-like parallel 5ths separate the soloists at bars 44, 46, 52, 58 and 67 with a heterophonic treatment of the duet between bars 72 - 76. The following example of verbal underlay smacks of medievalism:



1 Quoted by Walter Rubsamen, MQ. Vol.36, Oct.1950, p.582.

2 op cit. p.6.

3 Stravinsky, Dent, 1975, p.121.

4 op cit. p.56.

Don V. Moses makes the following criticism concerning the beginning of the Gloria: 'The omission of the Gloria intonation is inconsistent in that he uses one for the Credo. This liturgical mistake seems unlike Stravinsky; yet there is no written evidence to explain the deletion'.¹ However, the entry of a solo voice with the opening words, preceded by instruments, may indicate a deliberate artistic scheme governing Stravinsky's omission of the plainsong incipit. (Kodaly's Missa Brevis with organ of 1945 does require an unaccompanied priest's intonation for both Gloria and Credo. But many earlier settings of the Mass have fully composed Gloria movements. An a cappella setting contemporary with Stravinsky's, the Missa In Honorem Sancti Dominici of Rubbra, commences the Gloria with full choir.)

In form, the Gloria has five sections of varying lengths each with alternating solo-tutti response.

- 1) Gloria - alto, then freely inverted by discantus
- 2) Laudamus - chant-like choral motif accompanied by brass pedal-point A flat and then repeated (exactly) twice
- 3) Domine Deus - solo/duet of two almost identical strophes
- 4) Miserere - solo (based on 1) + tutti based on 2. Repeated 3 times with 3 bars added at fig.20 for textual reasons
- 5) Quoniam - at fig.22. Coda-like section based on 1 + tutti Amen.

Moses² notes that 'basically all the material is offered in the first twenty-six measures, then the derivative material begins'. The significance of the opening phrases, especially the solo vocal lines, leads to an over-all quasi-rondo structure: A - B - A1 - C - A2 coinciding with the five sections

1 A Conductor's Analysis of the Mass (1948) by Stravinsky, Indiana, 1968, p.14.

2 ibid. p.16.

above. Even the first instrumental flourish recurs in slightly altered shape to herald the Domine Deus portion. Exact and near-exact phrase repetitions are a feature of this whole, tightly integrated movement. Much of the second solo part derives thematically from the first. For example, the treble entry at bar 11 employs an inverted version of the alto's first chant-like pattern, whereas at bar 44 the treble line justifies Stravinsky's own label "discanti" by following in parallel motion the outline of the lower solo voice. The Qui tollis section is structurally the same in music as it is in text, that is, in three divisions. Each division contains an alto-treble duet followed by the choral congregational response.

The choral texture employed here is consistently homophonic S A T B with the indication "preferably a Solo Voice" against the treble and alto lines introducing each new section. Essentially syllabic treatment of the text and the vertical synchronising of all four voices give the movement great clarity, further assisted by the restrained dynamic level of both voices and instruments and the simple chant-like inflections of individual melodic lines. The voice parts, both tutti and solo, have some expression markings notably leggiere dashes (eg. bars 5 and 27ff.), accents (7 and 79, solo voices only) and breath marks (48, 52, 87, soloists only). Solo and choral passages link fairly naturally as far as pitching (aided by the instruments) and tempo (aided by the even ♩ pulse underlying the entire movement) are concerned.

Though ♩ = ♩ throughout a crotchet pulse (♩ = 72) pervades the solo phrases where melisma is a stronger feature than in the tutti passages where syllabic underlay prevails. The latter produces a chugging effect in contrast to the lyrical solos. Stravinsky uses vowel repetition to preserve this rhythmic momentum, as in the phrase Gratias

agimus tibi:Ex. 16

(P)

S

27 Gra-(a)-ti - as a - (a)-gi-mus Ti-bi prop-ter ma-(a)gnam glo-(a)-ri - am Tu - am.

Metre changes (3/8 2/8 4/8) dominate the chorus parts but not the solo sections until the last, bars 72 - 84. The solo melodies themselves exhibit great rhythmical freedom achieved by gentle ♪ ♪ ♪ syncopations, ties over the bar-line, decorative triplet ornaments and triplet divisions of the main ♪ beat. In the instrumental parts the last five bars produce an hemiola effect against the duettists.

Melodically, as well as rhythmically, the choral writing returns to the spirit of the Three Sacred Choruses. Very limited pitch ranges are adopted and the central passage from bar 53 to 71 exploits monotone chanting in the top voice. Apart from the final F sharp the bass line is restricted to the major 3rd A flat - C.

Ranges: S. maj.9th	D flat - D sharp (solo voice)
A. aug.6ve	B flat - B
T. aug.5th	E flat - B
B. aug.6th	A flat - F sharp

Conjunct motion is plentiful assisting the lyrical solo parts especially. Stravinsky sets the marking sostenuto over the opening and the accompanying Instruments follow the same stepwise trend here. The tetrachord E - F sharp - G sharp - A of the alto intonation serves as a primary thematic cell for much of the movement. Melodic inversion in the first treble passage has already been noted. At bar 19 the sustained wind parts reveal that the chorus music is written to one A flat major 7th chord with the individual voices oscillating between notes of that chord. Melisma is confined to the solo writing.

The basic modality of the Gloria seems to be Dorian on E with shifts to B from bars 44 - 71. The more drastic shift to A flat at bar 19 is achieved by enharmonic change. In the four-part homophonic writing

7th and 9th chords predominate once more but the 7ths are significantly minor here. Most discords are comfortably approached through stepwise lines. In the two-part solo passages 3rds, 4ths, and archaic-sounding 5ths are emphasised with a mixture of similar, contrary and oblique motion plus note-against-note lay-out. The movement closes with a plagal cadence on D. In the final chord B and E in the trombone parts clash with the D tonality but anticipate the Phrygian modality of the Credo.

There is a contrast between the instrumental style supporting the solo voices and that accompanying the chorus. Florid arabesques dominate the former whilst in the tutti sections sustained chordal writing is the norm with pedals and inverted pedals employed consistently. Bars 19ff. are accompanied by a static repeated chord throughout all the brass instruments. Another bell-like idea, a sforzando chord from oboes and cor anglais, punctuates the phrases in the closing duet section. Woodwind and brass choirs alternate until coming together for the first time at bars 73ff. It is this final section which sees a rare occurrence of instrumental doubling of the (solo) voices. Throughout the score of this movement the accompaniment enjoys far more detailed expression markings than the sung parts. Mutings, solos, articulation including breath marks, as well as varied dynamics are clearly set against woodwind and brass lines. The Boosey and Hawkes miniature score has pp for the brass parts at bar 19 which would be a most sensible precaution in support of voices marked p at the same point. Similarly the vocal duet at bar 72 is marked up to mf with accompanying brass as pp. All such dynamic levels are relative to the size of the performing choral group, its distance from the instruments and the acoustics of the performing situation. In general, Stravinsky shuns the use of graded crescendi and diminuendi, the most dramatic exception in this movement being the swell in instruments and voices at the end of the penultimate bar followed by the subito piano of the final Amen.

Credo (153 bars)

Stravinsky to Evelyn Waugh: 'In making a musical setting of the Credo I wished only to preserve the text in a special way. One composes a march to facilitate marching men, so with my Credo I hope to provide an aid to the text. The Credo is the longest movement. There is much to believe'.¹ The text of the creed provides the greater length of this central portion of the Mass and, for many composers, the greatest opportunities for pictorialism. However, Stravinsky once more resists the literal treatment (as we saw in the setting of Psalm 150 concluding the Symphony of Psalms) and creates the most uniform, through-composed movement in the work. Moses describes it as 'severe and dogmatic..... a syllabic choral recitation.....It is a Credo devoid of musical description or textual dramatisation chanted basically on one dynamic level with but one crescendo'.²

As is liturgically appropriate the Credo begins with the priest's unaccompanied plainsong intonation, the Gregorian intonation beginning the first, second and fourth Credos of the Ordinary of the Roman Catholic Mass and quoted here in Stravinsky's score. This opening also provides, indirectly, some of the compositional material for the movement as Moses explains at length:

'Stravinsky draws upon the opening intoning of the Credo..... by the priest for motivic ideas, namely, the falling 3rds and the rising 4th. For the most part, he uses the ascending stepwise movement of a 4th to achieve a climax in a section, then closes with a descending stepwise movement within a 3rd: measures 7 - 11, 71 - 86 (discanti rising a tritone) and 102 - 122. This ascending motion is used with a crescendo to climax the Crucifixus section'.³

1 In 'Stravinsky's Mass: A Notebook', New York, 1949

2 op cit. p.21.

3 ibid. p.25.

The 1932 Credo had dispensed with the solo priest's intonation but Stravinsky's own music was there heavily based on harmonised plainsong. WW.(p.408) looks back in the composer's repertoire for influences on the 1948 Credo.

'The Credo in his Mass does not follow the plainsong treatment of the earlier Credo: but there are so many words to express this belief that in order to consume the words and their syllables, he had recourse to chanting, a device he had previously used to any marked extent only in Zvezdoliki and Pater Noster'.

Most consistent in this movement are the 'measured quaver pace and unvarying piano level', the syllabic underlay and homophonic choral texture. Only three words gain higher relief, 'ecclesiam', 'peccatorum', 'mortuorum' -- achieved by changing from ♪ to ♩ pulse, accelerating the harmonic rhythm by oblique part-writing, increasing the dynamic level and underlining with fuller orchestration. The piano dynamic is also broken by a four-bar crescendo on the words 'cujus regni non erit finis' after which it drops back to the volume and the harmony of the movement's opening.

The Credo's structure is a 'juxtaposition of six small units, sections of different tessituras, tending each to a few chords' (Moses). The units are distinguishable mainly by text and orchestration as well as the aforementioned tessituras: bars 1-25, 26-43, 44-70, 71-101, 102-123, 124-147 plus final Amen. Stravinsky preserves the same motivic material in most sections, one major change of metre, thematic ideas and instrumental texture being bars 26ff., 'Deum de Deo'.

Some material is repeated. At bar 102 a return is made to the same harmony and chanting style (though not vocal pitches) as the opening. Greater similarity in the treble vocal line, supporting harmonies and the instrumental bass exists between bars 12 - 19 and the two portions at 44-52, 53-61. Later bars 80 - 81 are repeated at 82-3, 87-9, 89-91 with exactly the same choral and instrumental parts. In none of the examples of motivic repetition is any obvious textual purpose served.

The choral homophony is as strict as that of the 1932 Credo save

for the final Amen. 'Like a separate porch attached to a building' (WW.) It is a simple and beautiful piece of a cappella polyphony. The pace is reduced poco meno mosso and the word Amen uttered twice in each of the staggered vocal lines. Exact imitation of the first five notes here is shaped to the rising scale of F (altos commencing with F, G, trebles continuing on A, B natural, tenors on C, D and basses on E, F). The second Amen cadences on a bare 5th G-D. The remaining choral texture includes SATB, SAATTB (bars 36, 50-2, 59-61), SAATB (bars 53-58) and SATTBB (bars 71-76). Significantly the divisions often mean part of the choir separating to reinforce the notes of another section (eg. in bar 36 tenors divide to share with both altos and basses). Such spreading of the choral forces needs careful handling in performance to meet the composer's obvious desire to balance certain chords in a particular way.

The three words 'underlined' above are each preceded by up to five bars chanting on static pitches in all four voices. Elsewhere such parallelism is mixed with all the other types of choral motion and spacing. Only three brief and incidental cases of part crossing occur, all affecting altos and tenors (bars 10, 121-2, 151). Walter White draws attention to the climactic way the treble and tenor lines move together in similar motion through bars 98 - 101 with intervals decreasing from a 10th towards the octave but actually reaching the final pause chord of the phrase on a minor 9th. The octave between the two voices only comes at the start of the next phrase. Dehning¹ feels that 'the voice leading reveals Stravinsky's penchant for mirror spacing, especially at these places' (quoting the Credo's first twenty-five bars).

The recommended metronomic pulse is the same as that for the

1 op cit. p.65.

Gloria (Stravinsky gives both $\text{♩} = 72$ and $\text{♩} = 144$ at the outset).

It is the quaver motion which dominates all but the three stressed words and the final phrase 'et vitam venturi saeculi'. Hemiola phrase endings arrest the rhythm at, for example, bars 50-2, 58-61, 62-5. Metre changes are not as numerous as in the other movements, $\frac{2}{4}$ being the overriding time signature. The change to $3/8$ at the words 'Deum de Deo' shows unusual respect for word rhythms prompting the following comment from William Dehning: '.....there are several examples of correct tonic accent, especially at fig. 27 ('Deum de Deo'). Whether this is intentional is debatable since it is a rare example in the Mass and rare with Stravinsky in general'.¹

Consistent with the chant-like character of the vocal writing is the relative absence of leaps in any one line (trebles bars 39-40 and basses bars 4-7 are exceptions). Melisma is shunned until the polyphonic Amen. Added to the static chording already mentioned (bars 124ff.) is the monotone chanting of six voice parts appropriately to the word 'crucifixus' and continued for six bars by trebles, altos and bass II voices. Neither this phrase nor the subsequent 'et resurrexit' have any of the traditional pictorialism associated with those words. Tessitura, dynamics and speed reveal nothing at these points. Only the gradual chromatic rise of the trebles from 'et iterum venturus est' to the defiant crescendo at 'cujus regni non erit' smacks of word-painting. (One might consider the monotones at bars 124ff. as literally matching 'unam Ecclesiam' and 'unum baptisma'.) Individual lines viewed horizontally present few pitch problems and the instruments aid tuning. All voices enjoy comfortable

ranges:

S	octave	E - E
A	maj.9th	B - C sharp
T	octave	E - E
B	maj.9th	F - G

¹ *ibid.* p. 65.

The prevailing modality is E Dorian, at times Phrygian, with shifts to F sharp (bars 12 and 44), F (71), and C (124). Cadences are generally Dorian with the exception of V - I cadences during bars 124-142 to emphasise the three highlighted words. Pedal points for the instruments often underpin the conjunct motion of the voices. 'This stepwise motion creates many II - I or vii - i cadences, which produce a modal feeling. The primary mode used here is Phrygian, with the upper voice usually moving in parallel 5ths above the harmonic root (usually in the instruments)' ¹ Seventh and ninth chords or superimposed harmonies again mark the cadences,

eg. bar	25	7th)	
	33	7th)	
	43	7th)	
	52	7th +9th)	all based on D
	61	7th +9th)	
(instrs.only)	70	7th +9th)	
	147	superimposed E maj. and D. min.		

The harmonic rhythm varies from half-beat changes (bars 10-11) to the later long monotone chords (eg. 124-8). Tuning all chords here requires consideration of balance within the choral group where, for instance, Stravinsky uses multiple doubling (bars 80, 82, 87, 89), and awareness that the instrumental bass is frequently at variance with the chorus basses. Bars 92-101 contain much chromaticism in the bass trombone part against which the bass singers pitch some major and minor 2nds in their lowest register. The final bare 5th of the unaccompanied voices awaits the provision of the major 3rd by the instruments introducing the Sanctus movement.

In the main the instruments follow the same chordal texture as the voices with much doubling of vocal pitches. The bass instruments seem most independent of their choral counterparts. Passages such as

¹ Mopes, op cit. p.23.

the setting of 'sub Pontio Pilato' exhibit a heterophonic relationship between voices and instruments. Others, like bars 92-101, show the instruments providing a strong rhythmic pattern against the choir. Dehning takes up this illustration. 'In this example Stravinsky has used triads in the trombones for reasons of articulation, not simply as a tonal device. The same kind of thing occurs in the Symphony of Psalms and it is another earmark (sic.) of Stravinsky's neo-classical style'.¹

Breath marks and articulation marks are provided for the instruments, though dynamic indications are scarcer and sometimes meaningless in the absence of such marks against the voice parts (as at the opening). The miniature score gives no indication of volume to the instruments at bar 80 where the words 'et resurrexit' are supported by the first use of the full five-part brass ensemble. Conductors need to edit vocal and instrumental copies allowing for local performing conditions and the composer's deliberate intent to preserve uniformity of dynamic level with the minimum of quasi-pictorial climaxes. 'The Credo is simply a contract between God and man stated in paragraphs. Amen is the signature'.²

Sanctus (69 bars)

Variety of expression marks this fourth movement in contrast to the homogeneous material of the longer Credo. Tempo and dynamic changes, harmonic variation and further use of solo voices versus full choir make this the most dramatic of the five movements. Immediate interest is offered by the melismatic setting of the word 'Sanctus' for two tenor soloists unaccompanied. Here, as elsewhere in the movement,

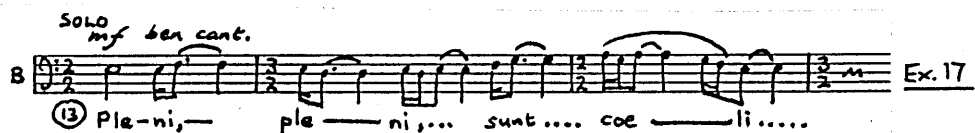
¹ op cit. p.70

² Stravinsky quoted in MQ., Oct. 1950, p.582.

Stravinsky is much more detailed in his own editing of the voice parts than is the case in the other sections of the Mass, and the instrumental music is no less well treated. Full use is made of the wind ensemble with all instruments joining in both Hosannas.

This movement presents without break both the Sanctus and Benedictus texts each followed traditionally by Hosanna in excelsis.

The Sanctus uses solo voices extensively, the Benedictus only full choir and both Hosannas the complete vocal and instrumental forces with substantially the same music amplified the second time. A coda, repeating the Hosanna text, occupies the final six bars. The full chorus participation in the Sanctus proper is confined to three reiterations of the word 'Sanctus' in snap rhythm ($\text{♩} \sim \text{♩}$) each time echoed one beat later by brass chords in the same rhythm. S A T T B soloists provide the ornamental opening and then, at bar 13, a four-part fugue exploiting the same snap rhythm and regular "tonic-dominant" entries in the order bass, tenor, alto, treble. This fugue, 'very close




in mood to the two-part fugue in the final Apotheosis in Orpheus'

(WW. p.449), leads directly to the tutti climax at Hosanna I, bar 25.

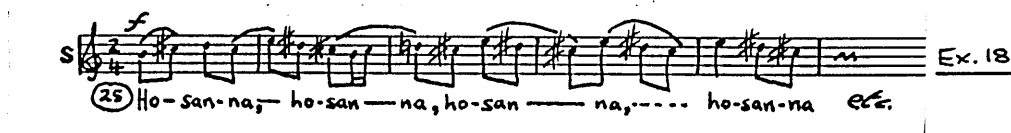
Francis Routh¹ also refers to Orpheus in describing this part of the Mass and cites specifically the horn music between figs. 144 and 145 of the 1947 ballet. The changes in the second Hosanna include a varied accompaniment and altered textual underlay, but the speed and melodic outline of the first Hosanna are preserved. Linking Hosanna I with the Benedictus is a sustained A from the trumpet in C, a cue for the first alto phrase of the new section.

¹ op cit. p.121.

The voices are arranged as homophonic SATB for the Sanctus and throughout the Hosannas. The Benedictus exhibits more independent part-writing and a brief octave division of the basses in bars 40-1 (merely to preserve a scalar line). The text is here set syllabically, though some melisma is allowed in the Hosannas. Both the latter possess an undulating character as a result of contrary and similar motion in stepwise treble and bass lines and no oblique spacing until the coda where the lower three voices descend away from a monotone treble. Parallel movement of pairs of voices is also a feature of the Hosannas, for example parallel octaves between treble/tenor and Alto/bass in bars 52-54. The tenor duettists at the outset both have rhythmically ornamented lines of melisma moving independently of each other. Here and in the following fugue Stravinsky is specific in indicating "solo" against the vocal lines, unlike the "preferably" qualification of the Gloria solos. The fugue enjoys very sparse support from no more than two brass instruments at any time (one trumpet and two trombones sharing material in long notes independent of the vocal writing but offering pitch aids on principal beats):.

The greatest tempi contrasts in the whole Mass are found in this movement - Sanctus ♩ = 56 (the slowest section of the Mass), Benedictus ♩ = 58, Hosannas I and II ♩ = 98 (the fastest section of the entire work), Coda ♩ = 84. The rhythmic motif  from the first choral entry provides a link with other sections, recurring in the fugue subject bar 13, as an ornament in the final phrase of the Benedictus and as the rhythm of Hosanna in the coda bars. The instruments presented this rhythm at the start of the movement and echo each choral 'Sanctus' with the same. The quintuplet semiquavers and triplet quavers of the tenor solos look back to the rhythmic ornamentation of an earlier age. So does the use of double-dotted patterns in the bass instruments at bars 38-41. The music's increased pace at the Hosannas is created not

only by the change of metronomic pulse but by the impetus of Stravinsky's shifting word accents, different in both



sections and recalling 'the treatment of simple tunes in the Russian vernacular idiom used in The Wedding' (WW. p.449). At bar 50 the instruments provide a two-bar introduction to the second Hosanna section and the bassoons' staccato pulsing semiquavers in the first six bars here form an irregular but highly charged lead into bar 57's repeat of the accompaniment used for the earlier Hosannas. Crotchet movement predominates in the central Benedictus, marked Tempo primo, though not metronomically identical to the Sanctus. In this section we see and hear a more natural accentuation of the text compared to the jagged iambs of the Sanctus and the cross accents of the Hosannas. In the Coda the voices achieve a hemiola effect over the bar-lines despite the steady minim, one-chord-per-bar tread of the instruments.

The first tenor solos establish the pattern of conjunct melodic motion which dominates the whole movement. A recurring thematic cell is the stepwise rising interval of a 3rd first seen in the tenor I solo bars 2-3. It reappears in treble and tenor lines on the word 'Dominus', bar 11, and in the first bars of each Hosanna passage. The descending 3rd marks the opening of the Benedictus. Such insistence on melodic (and indeed harmonic) 3rds is not surprising when one looks back at the Symphony of Psalms, especially fig.22 of the finale (qv. p. 60). Dehning rightly declares that 'the Hosanna manifests another Stravinsky characteristic: oscillation around a nodal point and/or permutation of a single melodic cell'.¹

¹ op cit. p.75.

The fugal interlude has some notable melodic features. The bass exposition reflects clearly the Phrygian mode on E and in six bars breaks with conjunct motion only twice. The tenor's real answer, however, maintains stepwise progress through the use of chromaticism. The solo treble's high G's in bars 23-24 are the highest notes of the Mass. All the solo lines are plentifully supplied with phrase marks, breathing pints, accents, dynamics and the indications cant. and ben cant.. Descending scales are a melodic feature of both voices and instruments in the Benedictus. Ansermet pointed to '..... the Benedictus, in which is to be noticed the traditional melodic descent on the words 'qui venit in nomine Domini'.¹ The tenors in fact imitate the trebles' descent bars 44-47. The ostinato-like Hosanna melody exhibits the same cross-relation effect of D sharp versus D natural (treble and tenor voices in alternate bars from 25ff.) as that in the tenor I solo at bar 9. The upper woodwind instruments herald the three-note theme at the beginning of the second Hosanna section, which punctuates the first three utterances of the word with quaver rests before the final driving repetition of the earlier, bars 25ff., version. Melisma in this section is slight compared with the Christe eleison and Credo Amen of the previous movements. Ranges: S min.9th F sharp - G
A maj.9th C - D
T min.10th E - G
B min.10th A - C.

The prevailing tonal centre of the movement is B with shifts to E Phrygian. The Benedictus starts out curiously in F but returns to B after six bars. Unresolved 7th chords appear at a number of cadences: bars 24, 36, 48-9. Other discords are of a passing variety pitched easily from the conjunct movement of individual lines. The instruments help tuning and voice leading in passages like the Benedictus assisting delayed entries.

1 op cit. p.7.

A source of some apparent controversy is the analysis of the final chord. Walter White explains this as a dominant 7th in D with the tonic D anticipated. The offending notes are the trumpets' G and D (plus D in the cor anglais) which, though approached logically after scale and arpeggio passages respectively, disturb the basic A major first inversion. White (p.450) quotes Ansermet as describing the chord as 'an agglomeration of notes, which the ear cannot take in and which is literally cacophonous'. Apart from the curious clash of trombone F natural against the choral bass E in the penultimate chord, there is no more perversity in the cadence than in the over-all harmonic dissonance. The resonant A major chord for all four voices can easily be allowed to dominate the final sound with judicious tempering of the trumpet and cor anglais dynamics.

The bell-like figure for oboes and solo trumpet in the first bar anticipates the word rhythm of 'Sanctus' as well as looking back to the "bell chords" of the Kyrie (bar 1) and Gloria (bar 75). The choral reiterations of 'Sanctus' are each repeated antiphonally by the three trombones. Throughout this movement the instrumental music is sparse in texture - notably the brass duets against the vocal fugue - save for the tutti effects in the two Hosannas and the ten-part harmony supporting the soloists in bars 11-12. Details of the amplified orchestration in the final Hosanna have already been noted. One general feature of the instrumental harmonies is the employment of well spaced 3rds between pairs of instruments, especially low 3rds as in the bassoon and trombone parts at bars 50ff. Dehning describes this feature as 'highly reminiscent of the "psalm chord" in the Symphony of Psalms'.¹ The latter work may

¹ op cit. p.75.

also have prompted the brief neo-baroque dotted rhythms of the bassoons in bars 38-41. A similar, though not double-dotted, accompaniment is provided in the second movement of the earlier composition at fig. 14 in the bass instruments. The same passage in the Benedictus is followed immediately by two unaccompanied bars for the full choir (bars 42-3). Elsewhere it is the instruments' prime function to "tune" the voices and there is much doubling of individual choral lines. Examples include trumpet I and trebles bars 11-12, upper woodwind and altos bars 38ff. and bassoons(!) and trebles bar 44. The Hosannas show more independence of melodic material between vocal and instrumental forces. Here the aim seems to be the provision of harmonic support with interesting syncopated chord changes. As already stated the orchestra's harmonies in the Coda move rhythmically counter to the quasi-hemiola effect of the choir. Dynamic balance between the two performing groups remains the conductor's chief problem here. Stravinsky is careful to mark down the instrumental levels during the solo quartet music, mp for brass against mf in woodwind and voices. The first Hosanna also sets the brass one dynamic level lower than the other performers. But in the Benedictus voices and instruments share the same markings (with added prominence given to the bassoons' double-dotted phrase) and in the second Hosanna, while f prevails in chorus and brass, ff is set against the woodwind. Obvious imbalance is partly off-set by the staccato nature of the woodwind chords punctuated by some rests but here and in the Coda bars the singers will have to be made aware of the possible competition. (Note change to trumpets in C for this and the final movement.)

Agnus Dei (45 bars)

The simple three-fold text here brings forth the simplest three-fold structure, the unaccompanied choral phrases being framed by balancing instrumental interludes. There are four of these, the first three being identical in all respects including articulation and dynamics. In their gently decorated homophony, the instruments match the choral style used here and the whole movement is akin to the polychoral antiphony of the early seventeenth century. Walter White, describing the quirk of resolving the instruments' ten-part texture onto a clear D Major chord after each of the first three interludes, is reminded of the neo-baroque, though somewhat tongue-in-cheek, flavour of the Lutheran chorales in Stravinsky's Soldier's Tale.

Modified canonic treatment is applied to the first choral entries, the voices being in pairs: treble with alto and tenor with bass. The intervals between the paired voices are imitated but not the actual pitches, the men's parts being set a tone lower than the upper voices. Detailed analysis of the intervals shows Inversion at work:

S/A 4 7/ 5/3 2 3/ 5 4/ 7 5 4/ 4 4/ 3 3 3 2 6 5/ 5 / 3 2 3/ 3 64 4 3

T/B 4 7/ 5 6/7 6 4 4/4 7 5 4 4/ 4 / 6 6/6 7 65 3/3

In section B abbreviated imitation is found:

T/B (bar 19) 2 3 3 6 4 3 3 7 6 3 5

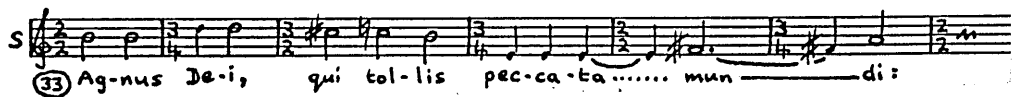
S/A (bar 21) 2 3 3 6 4 3 3 2 2 3 6

In the second choral passage the imitation stops with the syncopated setting of 'peccata', bars 23ff. No imitation occurs in the third choral section, being nine bars of pure note-against-note homophony. The textual setting is substantially syllabic while the individual melodic lines mix conjunct and disjunct motion. Tenors and altos cross parts in bars 13, 21, 27 and 34, in each case for no more than two crotchet beats and at

the close interval of a major or minor 2nd. Trebles and altos cross more widely at cadences in bars 28 and 38. Harmonic analysis (see below) reveals a high incidence of chordal dissonance which, coupled with the more angular part-writing and the a cappella nature of all the vocal music, makes surprising demands on the singers' musicianship relative to the previous movements. Fortunately the horizontal writing eschews difficult intervals such as tritones and major 7ths.

A serene quality is maintained by adhering to crotchet and minim note-values only in both vocal and instrumental writing and these at a pulse of $\text{♩} = 76$. Movement is rendered more supple and free from metric accentuation by the multiplicity of time-signature changes and syncopation. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{2}{2}$ in the first seven bars alone is an example of the former and the last choral entry changes metre in every bar. Syncopation is most pronounced in the first and last sung phrases and is achieved mainly by ties over bar-lines.

Ex.19



The central vocal phrase exploits short-long stresses for syncopated effect and when compared with the opening setting of the same text offers a clear sample of Stravinsky's arbitrary verbal accentuation:

Ex.20

The first two phrases of the Agnus Dei give the choral parts a more "horizontal" character than in the earlier movements. This is evident from the independence of the top paired voices from the lower and in the profiles of the individual melodic lines. There is here no

static chanting but a free mixture of conjunct and disjunct writing. Bars 34-5 (Ex. 19) reveal the most prominent chromaticism in the whole Mass. But though an absence of "difficult" horizontal intervals has been noted there are problems of voice-leading and of pitching in a vertical context. The tenors face the most severe of these problems with a number of unprepared discords: the B flats beginning phrases 1 and 2 are unrelated to the previous chords and dissonant with the accompanying voice(s); leaps precede major 7th dissonances in bars 21 and 38-9; cross-relation colours the transition from bars 27 to 28. A practical aid in the rehearsal of such places is to make the tenors aware of their scalar relationship to some preceding choral or instrumental part. For example, bar 19 means rising a semitone from the cor anglais A of the preceding bar, whilst the major 9th dissonance in bar 23 is a whole tone lower than the preceding (and still sounding) alto note. The cross-relation is easily handled by tuning tenors to trebles between bars 27-28. Most exposed of the pitching difficulties is the tenors' initial B flat immediately followed by a major 7th dissonance. In all voices ranges remain comfortable:

S	octave D	- D
A	maj.7th C	- B
T	min.7th Fsharp	- E
B	maj.9th G	- A

Slight melisma occurs in the first two choral phrases, notably on the opening word 'Agnus'. This is treated syllabically in the third and final phrase. (Note how bars 19-20 for tenors and basses copy exactly the trebles' and altos' pitches at 12-13 -- a further link between choral phrases 1 and 2.)

Bar 1 is essentially A minor harmony with added notes and serves as a dominant leading to the instruments' cadence on D major. Stepwise motion is significant in this introduction. Trombone I and trumpets I and II reach D major in advance of the cadence in the other instruments. There is no obvious tonal centre to the a cappella choral passages though

D major is strongly evident in the latter two. Phrase I opens in C and veers clearly towards F major for the rest. The harmonies in the last sung section are essentially tertian with added notes. In fact, each of the twenty-one chords sung in bars 33-41 contains a major or minor 7th or its inversion, twelve of the chords containing the harder dissonance. If the last vocal chord is thought of as a second inversion of C sharp major then it is the added major 7th (B sharp) which is taken up enharmonically by trombone II to commence the final orchestral ritornello. Here the brass conclude on D major (bar 43), the woodwind continuing to a bare 5th D - A with added minor 7th C and 4th G giving the effect of superimposed 5ths. There is no 3rd to indicate major or minor. At the final cadence the two bassoons mirror exactly the last five chords of trombones II and III.

Stravinsky's scrupulous phrasing and dynamic markings in the instrumental parts are not followed through in the choral writing. The third a cappella section has no markings whatever and each of the other sections merely has a blanket mf (apart from a break indicated after the treble and alto lines at bar 22). Though voices and instruments do not perform together here it is significant that the latter have dynamic levels set lower than the intervening sung portions. The brass, for example, end pp plus a diminuendo. In the repeated ritornelli the brass have p and the woodwind mp.

KYRIE	Large ternary		Opening prayer
GLORIA	Quasi rondo	A B A' C A''	Angelic hymn - glorification
CREDO	Through composed	A B C D E F G	Confession of faith
SANCTUS	Sanctus	A	Angelic hymn - glorification
	Pleni	B	
	Hosanna	C	
	Benedictus	D	
	Hosanna	C	
AGNUS	Large ternary		Closing prayer

The above summary table by Don Moses¹ again reflects the obvious balance between movements of the 1948 Mass, and the symmetry of the work's broad outline. It must be remembered, however, that the text of the Ordinary, in both its length and spirit, pre-determines that symmetry and not surprisingly a composer of Stravinsky's precision merely underlined the inherent formal characteristics. (Both the 1955 Canticum Sacrum and the 1962 The Flood exhibit increasingly strict chiasmic balance.) In the Mass the mood of the writing and the deployment of solo singers and independent instrumental material assist the over-all shape. Within movements the composer is concerned more with the general spirit of the text than with the significance of individual words. The latter are subjected to random musical accentuation, especially when repeated as in the Kyrie and Hosanna sections. 'The effect of this technique seems to underplay the meaning of the word and stresses phonetics to establish Stravinsky's manneristic rhythm patterns'²

The musical materials of the Mass reveal some unifying characteristics, notably certain melodic features and repeated "bell-chords". Rising 4ths and 3rds by scale and by leap occur in several places. 4ths dominate the oboe and cor anglais outlines of the Gloria Introduction and the vocal

1 op cit. p.37.

2 Ibid. p.38.

harmonies beginning the Agnus Dei. The two Hosanna passages rotate the voices through scales of 4ths and 3rds, the latter interval also dominating solo phrases in the Gloria (eg. 'qui tollis peccata mundi'), the Benedictus and instrumental interludes in the Agnus Dei. The semi-tone, which proved so prominent in the Symphony of Psalms, also colours the Mass, perhaps because of its Phrygian connotation. It starts Pleni sunt coeli in the Sanctus and forms the penetrating first trumpet opening of the Agnus. It is as a punctuating device that sforzando bell-like chords appear in the accompanying instruments. Clear examples are the three-fold repetition of the Kyrie's first bar and a similar three-fold reiteration of bar 75 in the Gloria. Another echo of the device is the chord beginning the Sanctus movement. The Mass is one of a group of works cited by Vlad (p.10) to illustrate Stravinsky's fondness for figurations based on the sound of bells (which have a ritual significance in the Russian Orthodox Church). Earlier uses include the song Tilim-bom (1915), On Saints' Day in Chiglsakh (1916), Chant dissident (1919), the finale of The Wedding (1922) and that of the Symphony of Psalms (1930).

It is Vlad who, along with other critics, looks even further back for the origins of this work's primitive religious character. 'According to Stravinsky's ethos, this Mass, like the Three Choruses, has a certain palaeo-Christian aspect. In the Three Choruses it is the spirit of Byzantine Music; in the Mass it is the Gregorian modes.....' (Vlad p.165). Diatonicism and modality are strong here when the use of polytonality - and polyphony - is negligible. Modal strands sometimes come together more after the manner of fauxbourdon or descant. The kinship with plainchant is strongest in the melodic lines of limited range such as the treble part in the Credo. The prime example of this is between bars 124 and 141 alluded to by Rubsamen. 'In its monotonous, almost barbaric intensity, this part of the Credo seems derived from the reciting tone of plainchant, which the composer says is

the basis of his entire Mass'.¹ '..... but the rhythmic chant that Stravinsky employs here is not the exclusive property of the Catholic tradition.....Stravinsky himself gave a version of the type, in another context, in Les Noces a good many years ago'. So thought Richard Goldman reviewing the Mass in 1949.² The Wedding has already been quoted for its use of bell figurations in common with the Mass and Vlad states further (p.179) that the two works share the extensive employment of the Phrygian mode, along with the Ave Maria and the Prelude to the Cantata of 1952.

The Mass points forward to later sacred works in terms of vocal and instrumental textures. In the Canticum Sacrum (1955) and Requiem Canticles (1966) there are still substantial passages of four-part homophony and syllabic underlay. However, more significant when compared with the 1948 work are the accompaniments to these passages. Movements 1 and 5 of the Canticum Sacrum are supported by solid wind textures comparable to the Mass but biased heavily towards the brass section and including the organ. Repetitive, percussive chords rather than athletic melodies are allocated to the orchestral instruments whereas the keyboard music is sustained, quasi-polyphonic. In the Requiem Canticles four muted horns sustain slowly changing chords while doubling the voices at Libera me. Just such a texture prompted Walter White's comment 'sounding like a harmonium'.³ By contrast the Mass produces greater variety of instrumental articulation but conductors must regret the fact that Stravinsky was unable to draw up an organ transcription of the wind parts which would have made the work more accessible, particularly for liturgical usage.

1 op cit. p.583.

2 MQ, July 1949, p.456.

3 Tempo No. 79, 1966-67, p.15.

Discrepancies between miniature and vocal scores (both Boosey & Hawkes):

(These concern mainly variations in dynamic markings. Though the limitations of a single rehearsal piano versus a ten-piece instrumental ensemble may explain some of these there is inconsistency in transferring the markings of one score to the other. This is especially true where two sets of dynamics are indicated simultaneously for the orchestra (@ below) and where the piano reduction sometimes takes the lesser and sometimes the greater level.)

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Kyrie | - bar 29 - m.s. gives pp for brass
v.s. gives nothing (possibly showing respect for the greater impact of brass sound). |
| Gloria | - bar 19 - m.s. gives pp for brass
v.s. gives p (Dehning, op.cit., considers p correct. The present writer again suggests pp is right for brass and p for rehearsal piano.)

- bar 72 - m.s. gives pp for brass ("senza sord.")
v.s. gives p |
| Sanctus | - bar 11@ - m.s. gives mf for woodwind, mp for brass
v.s. gives mp

- bar 25@ - m.s. gives f for woodwind, mf for brass
v.s. gives f

- bar 38@ - m.s. gives p for upper woodwind, mf for bassoons
v.s. gives p

- bar 44 - m.s. omits dynamics for instruments
v.s. gives p

- bar 50@ - m.s. gives ff for woodwind, f for brass
v.s. gives f

- bar 63 - m.s. inserts a pause over all vocal and instrumental parts
v.s. omits pause (Stravinsky's recording employs little if any <u>fermata</u> .) |
| Agnus | - bar 1@ - m.s. gives mp for woodwind, p for brass
v.s. gives mp |

Stravinsky's recording inserts a dramatic crescendo in the accompaniment during bars 48 - 49 of the Sanctus. Neither score indicates this.

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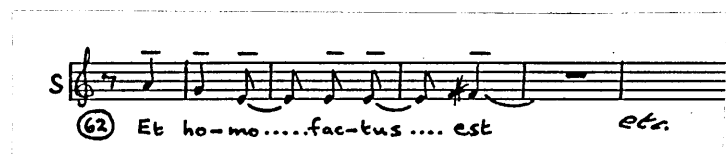
In the 'Poetics of Music' Stravinsky declared that

'contrast produces an immediate effect. Similarity satisfies us only in the long run. Contrast is an element of variety, but it divides our attention. Similarity is born of a striving for unity. For myself, I have always considered that in general it is more satisfying to proceed by similarity. What it loses in questionable riches it gains in true solidarity'.¹

The composer deliberately eschews pictorialism and plentiful dynamic variations as must the discerning conductor sympathetic towards the reserved style of so much of this sacred music. In performance, intensity and even variety of articulation is called for within the generally restrained character of this work. Detailed precision rather than histrionic gestures becomes the goal of the performers. Walter Rubsamen works from this premise:

'As to the method of performance, Stravinsky stressed over and over again the need for clear, bell-like enunciation of tones (fp, as if one were striking a tuning-fork) at all points of entrance, and especially in the Kyrie, the 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus' of the Gloria, and the intonation of the Credo. Even though the general level of the dynamics is low, and there are very few crescendi, the composer imbues his Mass with an atmosphere of suppressed excitement and achieves a remarkable degree of intensity by his demand for a subtle accent or marcato on each entrance, and for extremely precise rhythm'.²

Indeed the composer's written intentions become clearer in the particular than in the general. For example, he uses portato stress markings as below to assist what he calls 'rhythmic diction', an expressive detail here shared by the instruments. The quoted



Ex. 21

The image shows a musical score for a vocal part, labeled 'S' for Soprano. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, the lyrics 'Et ho-mo....fac-tus....est' are written, with ellipses indicating a long note or a specific rhythmic value. A circled number '62' is placed below the first note. At the end of the phrase, there is a fermata symbol and the word 'etc.' written below it.

example also illustrates Stravinsky's precise notation of where a release should take place, an indication coupled with a fermata at bar 101 in the same movement. We see too a concern for articulation and definition

1 PM. p.43.

2 op cit. p.583

evident in the indications of aspirated syllables, such as in the Gloria (bars 27ff., 51, 57) and in the Credo (bars 34-5). Execution of these should, as Dehning suggests ¹, be by means of diaphragmatic emphases rather than by glottal stroke or a simple aspirated separation by "h" before each vowel. In the Credo 'the phrases of the choir are extremely short and generally coincide with the respiration marks in the brass' (such as bars 3, 6, 16 etc.). An exception to this is bar 5 where breath marks appear in the accompaniment one bar before the vocal phrase-ending. Dehning adds that 'while 'visibillum' is notated \downarrow the recording elicits \uparrow '.

Some vocal releases must coincide with the instruments' chord changes rather than the usual "consonant-on-next-empty-beat" policy. The latter might apply at bar 91 in the Credo, but bar 86 illustrates the first type of release. Examples of Stravinsky's own notation of choral phrase-endings are at bars 65 and 123.

The demand for simultaneous contrasts of articulation in the Mass is stressed by Daniel Moe. ² He cites the sustained lyricism of the "Christe eleison" against which dry, staccato woodwind patterns are repeated and advises that both styles need to be exaggerated to emphasise the contrast. Clarity is also the concern of Rubsamen, assessing the effect of the first liturgical performance:

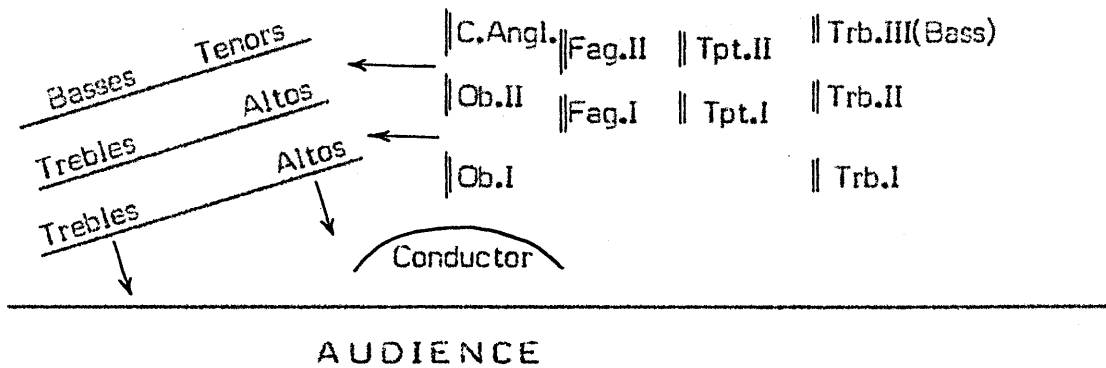
'The analysts should be aware of the fact that Stravinsky works by intervals and the resulting chords are incidental. As the organ played the accompaniment in St. Joseph's passages like this (the Hosanna) resulted in a dissonant blur. After the performance the composer expressed his intention of making a revised version for organ, so that the muddiness would be eliminated.....If Stravinsky's Chamber Mass is to be given in concert, it would be well to remember that the work will sound best in a small, acoustically sensitive auditorium'. ³

1 op cit. p.105.

2 'Choral Conducting: a Symposium', edited by Decker and Herford, New Jersey, 1973, p.175.

3 op cit. p.583.

The major accoustical problem is one of dynamic balance between the instrumental and choral forces. Early in the Mass, at bar 7 of the Kyries the high tenor trombone parts may cover the lower male voices and in the Sanctus, bars 11ff., a rare use of the full instrumental ensemble accompanies just four solo singers. Careful brass playing and avoidance of the traditional choir-behind-instruments staging would greatly assist in this area. Indeed, lateral antiphony would heighten the effect of passages like the Sanctus opening and in the following plan it is suggested that wind players direct their sounds along the line of the audience.



Details of a performance directed by William Dehning include the following layout:

5 basses	5 tenors
4/5 sopranos	5 altos

Fag. II	Trb. III
Fag. I Ob. II	Tpt. II Trb. II
C. Angl. Ob. I	Tpt. I Trb. I

Conductor

(Dehning op.cit., p. 111)

Female voices were employed here on the grounds that despite his early criticism of the use of women in the first Milan performance Stravinsky

did not himself employ children's voices in his own recording, nor were they used in the Los Angeles liturgical premiere. Dehning's conducting notes also acknowledge the difficulty of making clear the Hosanna sections. The mellismas here are disturbed by the unusual syllabification of the word and the 'median tessitura of sopranos, altos and basses'. The solution for Dehning was to have one singer per section to sing each note with exaggerated accent and staccato. Further advice on articulation seems in keeping with the general style of the Mass:

- 1) separate consonants from following vowels,
eg. et/ In u - num not eh/ tin/ noo/ noom.
- 2) separate consecutive vowels,
eg. kyrie ^ ele - l - son.
- but 3) elide where sibilance occurs,
eg. passus et se - pul - tus est (Dehning op.cit.,p.120)

In its liturgical motivation and in its idiom, at once neutral and universal, the 1948 Mass represents a most significant addition to the composer's own choral repertoire and to that of twentieth century sacred music in general. This secular age rarely sees major settings of church rites for practical use and it is a mark of Stravinsky's devoutness that he was prompted to produce this music not by a specific commission but by a personal spiritual impulse. One Soviet writer, Grigory Shneyerson, mentions ¹ the Mass as signifying Stravinsky's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith - a common enough rumour which Stravinsky found necessary to deny (qv. p. 23). He hoped the Mass would register 'a protest against the Platonic tradition, which has been the Church's tradition through Plotinus and Erigena, of music as anti-moral' (CO.p.137). Roman Vlad (p.166) would seem to recognise that aim when describing '..... the sense of joy and of unrestrained jubilation in the Gloria and

1 On Music, Alive and Dead, Moscow 1960, pp.138-58 (quoted in MQ, July 1962, p.357).

the Sanctus, produced without any other means than the subtlest shift of the metric accents and a few unobtrusive inflexions in the curves of the melismata'. However, to some critics the composer's restraint borders on the ascetic. Concerning the same Gloria and Sanctus Percy Young declares ' this loosening of rhythm is the only way in which this powerful, compressed setting of the Mass forsakes the words first principle for some feeling of human warmth'.¹ Francis Routh refers to the 'ritual severity of the Mass'² and in so doing reinforces the composer's own wish to write 'very cold music, absolutely cold, that will appeal directly to the spirit'.³ In its sometimes primitive simplicity the work can be undeniably direct in communication. Its terseness adds impact. Its mixture of archaic plainchant style and contemporary dissonance creates timeless universality. Its scoring is idiosyncratic while remaining to a degree practicable. Thus it is an unusual, totally individual contribution to the music for the Roman liturgy and its attributes were evident to R. F. Goldman even before its first liturgical performance:

'Although the symphony and sonata belong to anyone who claims them, the Mass traditionally belongs to an idea of God and a way of worship. It is, after all, the words and not the music that are always specifically religious; the music represents an attitude toward them.....Stravinsky's attitude is made clear in the austere beauty of his created sound, lacking in lushness and devoid of drama; but who shall say that this is inappropriate to religion?'⁴

1 The Choral Tradition, New York edition, 1971, p.284.

2 op cit. p. 122.

3 Quoted by Joachim Herrmann in a programme note for a Musica Viva concert, Munich, 6 July, 1956.

4 op cit. p.452.

CANTICUM SACRUM

Text: Stravinsky's dedication plus extracts from the Vulgate Bible (Deuteronomy, Psalms, Song of Solomon, Gospel of S. Mark, 1st Epistle General of S. John), all in Latin. For T. Bar. soloists, SATB chorus and orchestra (fl., 2 obs., cor angl., 2 fags., c. fag. 3 tpts. in C, bass tpt., 2 ten. trbs., bass trb., hp., org., violas, db., basses). Duration c. 17 mins. Order of composition:

Dedicatio	June 1955
Surge Aquilo	July 1955
Caritas	Aug. 1955
Virtues	Sept. 1955 1
Brevis Motus Cantilenae	Nov. 1955

Published by Boosey & Hawkes 1956.
First performed 13 Sept. 1956 at Venice International Festival of Contemporary Music in St. Mark's Cathedral conducted by Stravinsky.

The Canticum Sacrum fulfilled a commission from Alessandro Piovesan on behalf of the organisers of the Venice Biennale Festival of Contemporary Music and furnished the composer with an occasion on which to salute his favourite city. Venice was the burial place of Diaghilev, the first host to The Rake's Progress and the last resting place of the composer himself. Stravinsky's own dedication is sung by the two soloists as an incipit ('To the City of Venice, in praise of its patron saint, the Blessed Mark, Apostle'). The influence of the cathedral and its musical traditions may be felt in the instrumentation, predominantly wind groups with organ, and in some use of antiphony. The work's five main numbers appear (for example, to Robert Craft ²) to balance the five domes of St. Mark's, the central being the largest.

In the corpus of Stravinsky's choral works Canticum Sacrum represents a major break in musical and purely vocal style. It is the

1 Completed on 30/9/55, his wife's name day. Viera Nadiezhda Lyubov stand for Faith, Hope and Love in the Russian Orthodox Calendar.

2 'A Concert for St. Mark', The Score, Dec. 1956, p.35.

composer's first extensive use of serial techniques with massed voices, albeit a very personal interpretation of second Viennese School methods. Undoubtedly an important result of this compositional approach is the far greater inclusion of polyphonic writing for the four-part choir breaking markedly with the austere homophony of the early Sacred Choruses and the 1948 Mass. Individual vocal lines studied horizontally reveal some of the acrobatic angularity of Webern's melodic writing yielding at once more dramatic and more challenging parts than hitherto.

What is preserved from earlier sacred works is the universal Latin language – still treated in the composer's very original rhythms – and the organ-like timbres of the orchestral accompaniment. The Symphony of Psalms is a forerunner of the latter with the notable eschewing of vibrant treble register instruments in the string section and clarinets in the woodwind. However, it is just this combination of non-Romantic instrumental forces with serial composition techniques which brought the piece early criticism. '.... the instrumentation is much at fault. The Venetian ideal of heavy brass and organ led him into the error of imitating what is ideal for Gabrieli but unthinkable horrible for dodecaphony'.¹ Many such comments followed the first performance in Venice and we must be careful to make objective judgements of the work free from considerations of the idiosyncratic acoustics of its first home. It was perhaps unfortunate for Stravinsky's world-wide reputation that the Canticum Sacrum was linked so closely to St. Mark's where performance problems led to the premiere being described as 'Murder in the Cathedral' by Time magazine (quoted in WW.).

¹ Reginald Smith Brindle, MT. Vol.97, Nov.1956, p.599.

Yet it is the architectural proportions of this work which show Stravinsky's mathematical thought processes at their peak - and once again revealed in a most concise creation. After the nine-bar dedication five movements follow whose symmetry is only challenged for precision by the eleven sections of The Flood (1962). Erwin Stein made clear the Canticum's balance of form in Tempo magazine, Summer 1956:¹

'The five movements enclose a circle, whose very centre, the middle section of the third movement, consists again of five small divisions - by the alternation of soloists and chorus. This centre is surrounded by the two other sections of the third movement, which correspond with each other in that a choral canon is included in both of them, while the whole movement is connected by the ritornello. Pieces for solo voice are placed before and after the third movement, for tenor and baritone respectively. And the whole is encircled by movements that are mirrors of each other. The elaborate organisation of its structure makes the form of the Canticum Sacrum very consistent. There is a distinct contrast between the texture of the first and last movements, on the one hand, and that of the rest of the work on the other: the one is harmonic, the other contrapuntal. I feel that the less pliable structure of the outer movements - those on the circle's circumference - contributes to the consolidation of the whole'.

The outer movements take their balance from the carefully chosen texts, both from the same chapter of Mark's gospel. A future imperative becomes past achievement. So Stravinsky simply replays the first movement's music in reverse to form his finale. Similar textual symmetry determines the central section for this is a setting of the three Virtues (reversed from their usual order to give Charity, Hope and Faith). The other texts seem more disparate and certainly lead to less consistent musical treatment, though both Surge, aquilo and Brevis Motus Cantilenae employ solo voices with reduced accompaniments.

I <u>Euntes in mundum</u> (bars 10 - 45)	Text: Vulgate, St. Mark, XVI, 15. Euntes in mundum universum, praedicare evangelium omni creaturae. (Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature)
--	--

Over-all symmetry is again evident in the three choral passages separated by two performances of a nine-bar ritornello for organ and

¹ Quoted in SPD. p.434.

bassoons. Each choral passage overlaps its text (though not its music) with the end of the previous portion. For instance, bars 26ff. use 'in mundum universum' from bars 14 - 16.

Full choir, SAT

(div.)

B

(div.)

, is employed throughout in an evenly spaced, homophonic texture. Altos briefly cross sopranos (again called 'discanti' by Stravinsky) in bars 27-8 and the opening three bars have altos doubling the bass part at the octave. Otherwise a sonorous four-five part harmonic texture is maintained at a consistent forte dynamic supported principally by trumpets playing rapidly repeated chords. This strong homophonic sound plus insistent instrumental rhythms is most appropriate to the command-like text. The latter is proclaimed syllabically with the composer's usual arbitrary accentuation (cp. repeats of 'praedicate'). Cut-offs, such as in bars 11 and 13, are precisely notated though no expression marks are added other than the dynamics.

A relatively smooth melodic profile is provided for all four voices. The soprano line pivots on D in each section. Clear instrumental cues for the three choral passages come from trumpets, organ and organ respectively. Only the bass B flat in bar 10 may mislead the singers, being an ambiguity also present in bars 26 and 41. Cross-relation of B flat and B natural is a feature throughout both choral and instrumental parts. Further care is needed in tuning the tenor II/bass I C sharp following C naturals in the concluding bars. The final chord telescopes D - A 'tonic' harmony with A - C sharp - G 'dominant seventh'.

Vocal ranges: S maj.9th	D - E
A min.7th	D - C
T min.6th	B - G
B maj.7th	D - C sharp

In contrast to the brass staccato repetitions of chords in semi-quevers the voices move in legato chords of predominantly crotchet, minim values. This, and the absence of individually accented syllables, preserves a contrast between vocal and instrumental forces. The same

dynamic marks are given to both groups so that to protect balance of volume care must be taken over total numbers of singers and over their stage position in relation to the instruments (see later comments on performance problems). Conductors are aided by Stravinsky's layout of the score placing the chorus parts above all the orchestral music.

II Surge, aquilo (bars 46-93) Tenor solo, flute, cor anglais, harp and three double basses.

III Ad Tres Virtutes Hortationes (Bars 94 - 249) A chiasmic formula again governs the

organisation of this movement. Three separate pieces (the three Christian virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity in a reversed order) include two canonic serial pieces flanking a central choral duet with soloists in ABABA form. A 12-note 'passacaglia-like' phrase for organ introduces each of the three portions. The full four-part choir is reserved for the final 'Fides' section.

Caritas (bars 94-129, 116bis - 129bis) Text: Vulgate, Deut. VI, 5 and I John IV, 7.

Diliges Dominum Deum tuum
ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota fortitudine tua.

Diligamus nos invicem, quia charitas ex Deo est; et omnis qui diligit ex Deo natus est, et cognoscit Deum.

(Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Beloved let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.)

SAT voices present Stravinsky's first serial treatment of choral forces in a strict canonic idiom. The music for the Old Testament text is repeated for the New. In bars 116-129 three varying texts are presented simultaneously, each voice beginning with the same four words before diverging to independent texts. By contrast the second half of this chorus has all three voices contributing some part of the same text. Throughout this passage supporting parts for C trumpet and bass trumpet provide a fourth line of the canonic texture. Stravinsky's score notes that 'violins, divisi a 3, may support the chorus from bar 116 to 129bis, as an aid to the chorus pitches. The passage is included in the printed

viola part as ad lib. and should be played only if necessary'.

Tenors lead at bar 116, their initial twelve notes (116 - 119) being immediately repeated with a number of octave displacements (119 - 123) followed by a concluding eleven note pattern to 128. The New Testament words necessitate some splitting of the original note-values. Altos make the third entry, after the trumpet, with the inversion of the tenors' row transposed up a semitone. This is immediately repeated with octave displacements (121 - 125) and concludes with an inversion of the tenors' last eleven notes. At 120 the sopranos present the tenors' row transposed up a tone and with octave displacements of many notes. The row is then repeated with further octave transpositions and its third note sounded twice.

Angularity (note especially the tenor part bars 118 - 19) marks most of the choral writing and results in ensemble difficulties in addition to those of individual voice pitching. For instance, the three voices freely cross one another often as a result of octave shifts on isolated notes.

Without care in balancing these notes

Ex. 22

(eg. high tenor G above alto and soprano parts in bar 122) an uneven texture results. Voice-leading becomes precarious in these circumstances, as in bar 118 where the altos enter a major 2nd below another isolated high tenor note. The sopranos enter more easily, completing an ascending scale figure begun in bars 119-20 of the tenor part. The initial tenor entry is cued in the double-bass music at 115 and the tenors' concluding

D flat is enharmonically converted to start the repeat at 116bis.

Conductors must be aware of common pitches shared by strands in the canonic texture. The first alto entry, difficult in relation to the accompanying tenor part, is clearly cued one beat ahead by the bass trumpet. The same instrument cadences with the altos at bar 128.

Some vocal and instrumental doublings in Ex.22 are shown by dotted lines and choir-trainers must show these pitch aids to singers assuming that, as in the original performance, the optional violas' support is not resorted to. The Webernesque melodic profiles demand a notable extension of tessitura over that of the homophonic first movement.

Vocal ranges: S dim.11th C - F flat
A min.13th G - E flat
T min.13th C - A flat

The textual underlay is mainly, though not exclusively, syllabic and there is no rhythmic complexity at all. Each voice imitates exactly the rhythms of the others, only the solo trumpets having rhythmic variants of the series. The first six notes sung copy the opening organ rhythm though barred in 4/4 instead of 3/4. There is an important tempo change from $\text{♩} = 108$ for the instrumental introduction to $\text{♩} = 72$ for the vocal entries.

'Stravinsky originally barred each canonic voice according to its own independent rhythm, which is how the piece should be performed, though in the published score all voices have been barred uniformly for conducting purposes. The intervals are difficult to tune, but the tempo is slow enough for any good chorister to think and to hear pitch'.¹ Breath marks punctuate each line but are arbitrary, not following any textual phrasing. For dynamics Stravinsky provides poco sfp and sim. for both Instrumental parts in contrast to the cant. - non f for each of the voices. If these markings are observed literally then the valuable absolute pitch of the instruments should be clear to the voices. Craft adds a further recom-

1 R. Craft, op cit. p.42.

mendation concerning performing style:

'The chorus must sing without vibrato, and the soloists as well, save possibly the baritone in the latter half of his solo, for reasons of style as well as because wind instruments do not vibrate en masse as strings do (which is why I except the string-accompanied baritone passage). If one element, vocal or instrumental, vibrates so must all others, and together! 1

Spes (bars 130 - 183)

Text: Vulgate, Libr. Psalms 124.1,
129.4,5,6 (Psalms 125.1 and 130.5-6).
Qui confidunt in Domino, sicut mons

Sion; non commovebitur in æternum, qui habitat in Jerusalem.

Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus; speravit anima mea in Domino, a custodia matutina usque ad noctem.

(They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed but abideth for ever.

My soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.)

The central movement of the whole work employs both vocal soloists (tenor and baritone) and chorus. The latter is limited to high voices only and Craft specifies exact numbers of four *discanti* and four altos.² Supporting the chorus in each of its two phrases are two oboes, a tenor and a bass trombone whose rhythms underline the voice parts' consistent 5/8 time (mainly 2 + 3). Both choral lines have identical rhythms and substantially syllabic word-setting. The solo duets are more varied rhythmically and produce a two-bar *mellisma* in their final phrase. The over-all (chlastic) scheme is ABABA, alternating solo and choral voices, plus an 18-bar orchestral introduction.

The choir's melodic material is again serial but without any imitative, polyphonic treatment. In fact bars 155 - 157 present original and retrograde series simultaneously (the opening two notes being treated to an initial oscillating repeat in bar 154) and very close harmonic intervals result. Bars 169 - 170 yield another 12-note pattern shared

1 *ibid.* p.42 (footnote).

2 *ibid.* p.42

harmonically, six notes for sopranos, six for altos. The melodic profiles eschew the compound intervals of Caritas (altos bar 159 excepted) and a less angular shape emerges. Some difficult part crossings, though typical of the serial idiom, are irritatingly arbitrary when they involve isolated notes (bar 159 again). Both phrases show a notable use of fifths and sixths as harmonic spacings at the beginnings of bars. But the first interval of a major 2nd at 154 needs careful tuning after the solo tenor's B natural cue, reinforced at the lower octave by bass trumpet. Easier cues for the opening of the second phrase at 169 come again from the solo tenor (for sopranos' entry) and trumpet II (for altos). There are few pitch aids after these cues as the instrumental parts provide another series, the inversion of the introductory organ phrase, quite independent of the vocal lines. Common pitches are very rare and too brief in duration at $\text{♩} = 144$ tempo.

Three tempi are given for Spes. The instrumental opening is set at $\text{♩} = 108$, the solo voice phrases at $\text{♩} = 108$ and the choruses at $\text{♩} = 144$. The 5/8 rhythms are all straightforward and $\text{♩}/\text{♩}$ values prevail. Only Stravinsky's idiomatic word accentuation persists. Stress marks ˘ on individual random syllables (plus ˆ in the solo vocal parts) have no grammatical logic but alongside slurs which link even separate syllables (bar 159) they must emphasise contrasts in articulation. The slurs should be executed in portamento style whilst ˘ should indicate diaphragmatic detachment within phrases. One breath mark, in the first phrase, does observe the literary punctuation. Dynamics are static at mf for both phrases. The oboes acquire the poco sfp indication of the trumpets in Caritas and their volume should be carefully monitored as their lines normally lie above both the choral parts. Non f cautions the solo trombones which provide the real bass of the texture.

Vocal ranges: S dim. 11th D sharp - G flat
A aug. 11th B flat - E

Fides (bars 184 - 249)Text: Vulgate, Libr. Psalm 115.10
(Psalm 116.10)

Credidi, propter quod locutus sum;

ego autem humiliatus sum nimis.

(I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.)

Maximum polyphonic complexity is reached here with the six-voice canon for full choir plus two instrumental strands (trumpet doubled by contra-bass trombone two octaves below and oboe doubled by bass trombone three octaves below). The canon is an inversion of the two preceding phrases, each of which is a rhythmic variant for unison four-part choir of the original organ motif first heard at 94ff. Each of the canonic entries, in the order ASTB, also preserves that motif's rhythm. The first three entries continue with retrograde series (RI in the case of the tenors) and the four voices end together over the twelfth note of the bass entry. Each phrase of text is the same in all four voice parts.

Significantly the principal melisma in an otherwise syllabic setting is on the important word 'credidi' when it appears in the two preliminary phrases (eg. bars 206-7) and again in the retrograde portions of the SAT parts of the canon. A trill-like oscillation of the first two notes marks the openings of the earlier phrases, which differ from each other only in length and barring. The melodic contour throughout is more lyrical, avoiding the compound intervals of Caritas. The soprano and tenor voices are more angular as a result of octave displacements and lines freely cross, often producing harmonic intervals of a major or minor 2nd (Ex.23). In the

Ex.23

The musical score is for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "mi-lia-tus sum ni-mis. Cre-di-di,.... cre-di-di,..... cre-di-". The Soprano and Alto parts have melismatic passages circled in blue. The Tenor and Bass parts have melismatic passages circled in red. A circled "224" is at the bottom left. The text "Ex.23" is in the top right corner.

(224)

E-go.... au-tem hu-mi-lia-tus sum....ni-mis.

canon each entry is on a different pitch and intonation is difficult to focus given the independence of the brass writing (rhythmically simplified versions of the row) and possible absence of the cued viola parts. Of the latter, commencing at 218, the score states 'to be played only if required for acoustical reasons (up to bar 236)'. Tenor and bass leads can be pitched from previous upper voice notes but the sopranos' initial D sharp needs much rehearsal. The steady $\text{♩} = 80$ tempo of each of the choral passages may assist singers in hearing other lines.

Tranquillo mf marks the first choral unison and also applies to the second such phrase. But no dynamic is offered the singers at the commencement of the canon. One can assume a continuation of the original marking except that at bar 218 there is the change from massed unison voices to staggered sectional entries supported by brass which again have the indication poco sfp. Each choral entry bears cant. ♩ over the initial note - a reminder perhaps that the 3/4 barring does not govern accentuation in the normal way but that an emphasis should mark each entry irrespective of its position within a bar (eg. tenor and bass in the above quotation, bars 224ff.).

Vocal ranges: S octave	F - F
A min. 9th	B flat - C flat
T aug. octave	F - F sharp
B maj. 7th	D - C sharp

IV Brevis Motus Cantilenae (57 bars) Text: Vulgate, St. Mark, IX, 22-23
(Authorised Version: St. Mark IX, 23-24).

Jesus autem ait illi: Si potes credere, omnia possibilia sunt credenti.
Et continuo exclamans pater pueri, cum lacrimis dicebat: Credo, Domine;
adjuva incredulitatem meam.

(Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord I believe; help thou my unbelief.)

The notion of belief emphasised in Fides is continued in this fourth movement where there is also a strong musical link with the three Virtues. This is the use of the same 12-note series as that presented by the organ

at bars 94ff. The voices, led by the baritone soloist at 253, even preserve the row's original pitch. Once more an arch-like form can be discerned with portions for solo voice each side of an unaccompanied four-voice canon. The text unfolds continuously, shared by solo and choral forces, but Stravinsky here indulges in some telling word repetitions not consistent with the other movements. The soloist utters 'credo' four times (bars 284 - 289) thus adding to the emphasis noted at the beginning of Fides; 'cum lacrimis aiebat', presented three times by the chorus tenors (bars 276 - 280), is repeated in a plaintive, cadenza-like phrase by the unaccompanied baritone (bar 281, marked quasi rubato discreto, non f); and each of the soloist's four opening phrases is echoed by pairs of chorus voices in unison.

The whole movement offers the most varied and most vivid music of the Canticum, possibly prompted by the dramatic implications of the text concerning Christ's purging of the dumb spirit. The textures are original, ranging from the soloist-plus-unison echo chorus through the a cappella canon¹ to the final baritone solo, and the accompaniment makes use of the full orchestra (save for flute and cor anglais) though never as tutti. The central canon is the most dramatic chorus of the whole piece being

- a) unaccompanied
- b) polyphonic (with a strong 'subject' containing repeated notes)
- c) rhythmically interesting (syncopated at vigorous piu agitato tempo)
- d) bold in dynamic level (piu tosto f e risoluto)

In its last two bars (279 - 280) the canon slows down, marked Doppia-mente lento, ♩ = 96, matching the words 'cum lacrimis aiebat' in a way more literal than we are accustomed to in the composer's sacred music.

1 There is again provision in the score for optional doubling by four violas in bars 274 - 280.

The four choral echoes (Stravinsky labels these quasi un écho) alternate sopranos and tenors with altos and basses, each pair singing in octaves the end of the preceding baritone phrase. There is thus no problem of voice-leading given a secure soloist and choristers who can retain two - three bars' pitches before entering (in two cases) a 2nd apart from the baritone. Stravinsky also eliminates some of the baritone's wider intervals when transferred to the chorus, except in bar 270 where a minor 7th replaces the original major 2nd. In this portion of the movement the original and then retrograde versions of the series are presented, both with liberal repeats of notes especially in the trill-like motifs (eg. bars 272 - 3) recalling the setting of 'credidi' in Fides. (N.B. the chorus echo of the baritone's retrograde series omits one note, C natural.) Repeated notes are a feature of the a cappella canon commencing in bar 274 with the RI version of the movement's first series:

Alto and bass voices enter simultaneously with retrograde and inverted forms of the tenors' subject and the sopranos finally present the retrograde version of the same. If the first tenor note of bar 278 were 'corrected' to G natural then the tenors would complete the canon with the retrograde of their own first phrase. The altos' second phrase, compressed into two bars, inverts their first. The pattern of canonic entries creates problems of voice-leading in this unaccompanied texture for initial notes are unrelated to surrounding pitches. The tenors' four-fold D beginning in bar 274 must act as a pivot for the following alto/bass entry and the sopranos must continue chromatically the line started by the tenors in 276. Individual vocal lines are not exceptionally angular though major and minor 7ths are plentiful. Vocal ranges:

S octave F - F
 A min.9th B - C
 T maj.9th E - F sharp
 B dim. 9th B - C flat

Part crossings and the resultant harmonies present pit-falls for singers and choir-trainers in rehearsal, particularly when the marked speed of $\text{♩} = 96$ at bar 274 is attained. Much earlier preparation must be done at slow tempi with various pairings of voices before the whole choral ensemble is completed. The transition from the canon to the final baritone solo will expose dubious intonation for instruments only re-enter at the end of the soloist's cadenza at bar 281. Absolute pitch will enable the solo singer to make *any/re*-adjustment necessary.

Rhythm here presents a performance challenge for possibly the only time in this work. Relaxed triplet quavers and crotchets mark the echo phrases and in bars 270 - 271 Stravinsky offers rhythmic guides to align the chorus altos and basses with the baritone soloist. Metre changes (3/4 - 2/4 - 4/4 - 5/8) and co-ordination of the sparse instrumental parts must be considered. The opening instrumental bars hint at the rhythms which are such a characteristic feature of the unaccompanied canon. In this section the text is set syllabically save for melismas on the word 'lacrimis' in the tenor and alto parts. The first choral echo is a melismatic treatment of the single word 'Jesus'. There is in fact a contrast in style between the fluid rhythms of the echo section, each phrase containing triplet groupings, and the crisper risoluto of the canon, where strong initial accents (on the word 'et!') are indicated followed by pronounced syncopations. The baritone part is cantabile throughout. The principal metronome markings are:

bar 250:	$\text{♩} = 88$
" 274	$\text{♩} = 96$
" 279	$\text{♩} = 96$
" 281	$\text{♩} = 88$
" 295	$\text{♩} = 60$ ending <u>Allarg.</u>
	bars 303 - 6

The choral voices receive minimal instrumental support in the

movement's first section. This invariably consists of a unison note for brass doubling the baritone soloist's phrase ending. Dynamic balance is therefore not affected but nor do the voices receive any assistance in pitching entries. These must always be secured from the vocal soloist.

V IIIi autem profecti (37 bars) Text: Vulgate, St. Mark, XVI, 20.
IIIi autem profecti praedicaverunt
ubique, Domino cooperante et ser-
monem confirmante, sequentibus signis. Amen.

(And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.)

The command of the first movement has been obeyed and Stravinsky literally repeats his music of Euntes in mundum in reverse. The chorus parts are exact except for melismas in the finale phrase (336ff.) to accommodate the new text and slight redistributions of parts (cp. 325 and 27 for S/A, 340 and 12 for A/T.). Vocal ranges remain those of the first movement with the addition of a low B natural for altos in bar 340. Some lower voice divisi are omitted in the last movement. Also faithful in retrograde to Euntes are all the instrumental parts apart from the last four bars and minor re-distributions of chord notes. There is thus little instrumental doubling and indeed the same cross relations of D flat/D natural and, in the voice parts, C sharp/C natural from the first movement confront the performers at the outset of Illi autem.

The initial choral entry is pitched from the final organ chord of Brevis Motus and the forte chord in bar 307. One minor effect of the retrograde motion is the shortening of some phrases' final chords (eg. bars 311, 326, 338) akin to the cut-offs in reversed recording tape. Stravinsky does extend the last chord before the Amen (bars 340-41 compared with bar 12), but we lose the hangover of the bass instruments which marked phrase endings in Euntes. The Amen changes the dynamics of bars 10 - 11 from *f* to *p* and the metronome marking from ♩ =

116 to $\text{♩} = 66$ Adagio.

Apart from the melismatic stretching of the last two words, Stravinsky presents this text syllabically with none of the overlapping of phrases of the first movement. Conductors must appreciate at the start of the Canticum Sacrum that the repetition of a whole movement in retrograde motion demands very precise timing of note-values and particularly vocal cut-offs to avoid 'the peculiar feeling of deflation that comes from the precision with which chords are usually attacked in performance as contrasted with the lack of precision with which they are terminated'(WW.p.488). The reiterated, pulsating chords of the accompaniments do assist precision. Craft feels that 'remembering the mechanical ugliness of most retrograde rhythms, Stravinsky's achievement in creating rhythms that work so fluently both ways ought to be remarked'.¹ This is perhaps an inflated compliment bearing in mind the relative simplicity of all the rhythms in these outer movements. The strength of Illi autem is that its very simplicity of rhythms and textures is immediately discernible as having similarity to the style of Euntes in mundum even when the specific details of the cancrizan technique are not so obvious. By this means the composer clearly emphasises the work's arch-form, especially given its compact over-all duration.

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In Poetics of Music² Stravinsky explained that for him 'the direct influence of text on form is of secondary importance. Form of text is more often adjusted to musical form'. For many critics the text of the Canticum Sacrum is its most questionable feature. 'The

1 Ibid. p.44.

2 PM. p.154.

text follows no logical sequence, the music has neither continuity of style nor discourse'.¹ 'Inconsequent, too, is the selection of the words: the only common thread which barely holds them together is the fact that they all come from the Bible.....From a positivistic point of view there is little that could be said for a work of such remarkable stylistic inconsistency'.² There are two separate issues here, the spirit of the texts and the musical character they evoke. Unfortunately, for the casual listener (and critic?) Stravinsky has a somewhat intellectual approach to both, beginning with the now customary adoption of a ritualistic Latin translation. Certainly at first sight the Dedicatio may seem an unnecessary musical appendage and the present writer feels that those particular words would have been better written and not sung, perhaps being replaced with the final chorale from the Symphonies of Wind Instruments as Vlad claims was the composer's original plan.³ Then again, the second movement's Song of Songs extract seems disproportionately long and intriguingly secular in atmosphere compared with the other Biblical passages. But perhaps in Stravinsky's advanced thinking fleshly love needs to be juxtaposed with the spiritual variety taken up in the first of the Virtues, Caritas. The latter movement cleverly reinforces its subject by employing complimentary Old and New Testament quotations. There is a definite literary link between Fides and Brevis Motus - the common theme of religious faith - and movements 1 and 5 have dramatic balance of texts aiding musical symmetry. Therefore criticism of the word selection does not, under close inspection, hold up particularly well.

Stylistic inconsistency is another matter. Significantly the two most questionable texts, the Dedicatio and Surge, A. quilo, produce the only

1 Reginald Smith Brindle, op cit. p.599.

2 John S. Weissmann, MQ. Vol.43, Jan.1957, p.109.

3 Vlad p.81.

non-choral sections in the work, the first a mock-medieval curiosity for vocal duo and trombone trio, the second a tenor solo with chamber ensemble support in the 'avant garde 12-note style of around 1950' (Smith Brindle). Surge, aquilo is indeed an impressive piece but hardly in the hieratic manner of the large-scale movements. Re-scored for larger instrumental and vocal forces it could have matched the drama and vigour of the fourth movement which combines solo singer with massed voices. Elsewhere there is marked musical consistency with a clear distinction between the serially linked central movements and the homophonic, polytonal outer sections.

The descriptive matching of words and music was notably absent in the sacred choral works preceding the Canticum Sacrum and the abstract idiom of serial music does not always lend itself to pictorialism. The truth of the matter is that the canticle does have a greater degree of literal word treatment than the earlier works but much of it is more evident on paper than in the ensuing sounds. The final chorus looks back in words and literally in music to the first. The reversal of the three Virtues gives charity its true theological pre-eminence and enables Stravinsky to link two portions of the work on the same theme of belief, Fides and Brevis Motus. Universal faith is perhaps underlined by the reserving of full choral forces for that virtue and the remarkable (for Stravinsky) six-fold unison repetition of the initial word 'credidi' with its oscillating semitone and melisma. (The solo baritone's repetition of 'Credo' in movement 4 has already been noted.) Musical repetition is in fact a feature of the whole work. Illi autem is a disguised repeat of Euntes, but Caritas exactly re-runs its canon when New Testament words replace Old on the same subject. When the words 'speravit anima mea' appear in Spes at bars 158-160 and 169-171 they take identical vocal lines. The echo phrases for chorus in Brevis Motus automatically stress

the soloist's text which, interestingly, again centres on belief. Two balancing textual ideas ('I have eaten by honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk') have the same setting for solo tenor in bars 80-82/83-85. The word 'perfla' in this solo movement has a pictorial *mellisma* accompanied by an appropriate flute solo. As well as the treatment of individual words a more general reflection of the text's character can be seen in a number of sections. The energetic mood of the framing choruses is supported by the homophonic choral texture at $\text{♩} = 116$ over repeated staccato wind chords. This is in contrast to the lush lyricism of the solo second movement concerning earthly love. Spiritual devotion yields the cantabile canon of Caritas, human desparation the agitated rhythms and dramatic pace changes of the polyphony in the fourth movement.

If the literalism is not typical of earlier Stravinsky other features are more so. Craft presents a list of these to be found in *Euntes* alone:

'..... the accent and syncopation, in the repeated-note accompaniment in the brass, in the thirds and octaves in the bass line, and in the intervals. Stravinskian also is the restriction of harmony to one tonal neighbourhood, B flat in this case, and the use of dissonance and consonance in relief: something that is possible only in this diatonic, ie., non-saturated style'.¹

The choral texture and rhythmic impetus of movements 1 and 5 recall the composer's earliest 'Russian' period and works such as The Wedding. Throughout the Canticum Sacrum the instrumentation of the choral movements reminds us of the Symphony of Psalms with the addition of the organ's sonority perhaps secretly striven for in the liturgical Mass of 1948. Adherence to a strictly four-voice choir, with sopranos labelled Discanti, also harks back to the previous sacred works. Exceptional are the solo/chamber forces of Surge, aquilo, more akin to the Cantata of

¹ R. Craft, *op cit.* pp.37 - 8.

1952 and outside the scope of the present account.¹ Yet the Cantata, together with the Septet(1953), the Three Songs from William Shakespeare (1953) and In Memoriam Dylan Thomas (1954), pave the way towards the polyphonic complexities of the 1955 work and especially the serial material which furnishes that polyphony.

Just as the Shakespeare songs and the Dylan Thomas memorial create note rows of fewer than twelve notes so in the Canticum Stravinsky maintains an individual approach to the writing of serial melodies compared with the stricter Webern models he was said to be hearing at the time (eg. Webern's Op.22 quartet). He frequently repeats notes in the row (Canticum bars 274ff.) as he was to do later in Threni. This includes a particular penchant for oscillating trill-like motifs such as bars 154, 204ff., 258, 261 (all choral melodies) and 80, 83, 253-55 (for soloists). The composer has also acknowledged 'tonal' thinking in the construction of his serial themes. When Craft asked if his intervals exerted tonal pull Stravinsky replied:

'The intervals of my series are attracted by tonality; I compose vertically and that is, in one sense at least, to compose tonally.....I hear harmonically, of course, and I compose in the same way I always have'.²

An awareness of this point might give heart to choir-trainers preparing the canonic choruses. Triadic elements as well as vertical harmonies can serve as havens in these passages, for example:

Ex. 25

1 Weissmann (op cit. p.106) and Craft (ibid.p.43) see similarities between the canticle's solo writing and Oedipus Rex. Craft also compares movement 3's duet music with the cat and goat duet in Renard as well as the shepherd and messenger of Oedipus.

2 CO. pp.38-39.

Disjunct melodic writing dominates the serial movements (Fides less so) in contrast to the smoother profiles of the chorus parts in Euntes and Illi autem. Angularity, plus rhythmic freedom, are 'features characteristic of Webern, as is also the way in which Stravinsky has conceived the metrical articulation of each line in accordance with the independence of the canonic movement, which is that to be observed in performance, the joining of the four lines in the score by means of a bar-line being intended only for the convenience of the conductor'.¹ Craft is more cautious about Webern's influence. He acknowledges this on the structure of the Caritas canon 'which ends like the last movement of Webern's Op.31 (Cantata), and which resembles a canon in the Webern Variations for Orchestra in that each entrance is at the semitone. But the series intervals are not at all like Webern's and the melodic structure is wholly unlike the Viennese masters'.² Vlad considers '..... the continuity of the vocal line..... enough to eliminate any flavour of Webern from the general musical pattern'.³ Certainly one cannot describe any of the choral writing here as pointillistic. But even the continuous melodic lines of, for example the canons in Caritas and Brevis Motus, have an angularity derived much more from instrumental writing than from vocal origins.⁴ In contrast the chord shapes and pivotal character of the sopranos' D's in the outer movements are readily assimilated because of their vocal character. Another contrast between the serial and non-serial choruses is that the former demand a generally wider singing compass than the latter. Most of the work's melodic phrases are asymmetrical and more angular than curved in over-all outline.

1 Vlad pp.194 - 5.

2 R. Craft, op.cit. pp. 44 - 5

3 Vlad p.194

4 Peter Evans (New Oxford History of Music, Vol.10, p.398) suggests that '.....a control of wide vocal intervals underlines the debt to Webern!'

Despite criticisms to the contrary there is a degree of inner unity to the Canticum Sacrum and form is once more the major factor here. If Stravinsky thinks of the Ad Tres Virtutes Hortationes as the psychological and artistic heart of the work then three-fold symbolism, as in this central 'cantata within a cantata'(WW.), extends to other movements. Euntes reveals an ABABA structure with three choral phrases and Brevis Motus again falls into three contrasting sections. Excluding the introductory Dedicatio the total structure - of soloistic, lyrical movements between the central triptych and mirror-image outer sections - is chiasmic or 'concentric' (Weissmann's label ¹) and heard to be so. Textual links between movements and the thread of serial material through the middle sections unifies the whole and we should note the use of common or adjacent pitches between numbers as well as attacca markings joining the three Virtues. Movement 3 starts on the pitch ending Surge, aquilo and a descent of one degree separates each Virtue. Three-quarters of the final organ chord in Brevis Motus is retained to begin the final chorus. Hence Craft's warning: 'It is awkward to pause between movements, so great is the musical consequence and resolution'. ²

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If the fine planning of the Canticum's structure is to be aurally effective then performers must be secure. That the piece breaks new ground in the sequence of Stravinsky's choral music has been stated above and the conductor is faced with the usual hurdles of intonation, rhythmic precision and dynamic balance between vocal and instrumental

1 J.S. Weissmann, op.cit. p.104.

2 R. Craft, op.cit. p.41.

forces – but all to a much greater degree than hitherto. Paul Steinitz had to face the task of the trainer of an amateur choir in preparing for the first English performance of the work and summarised the problems with some solutions in The Score.¹

- i) psychology – rehearse Euntes and Illi autem first. They are technically easier and more powerful in impact.
- ii) pitch – a) tackle Movement 3 canons next..... then bars 274ff.
b) Initially rehearse parts separately and 'edit out' (by 8ve. transpositions) the more notorious leaps, eg. Steinitz's first version of bars 117–119 with the original:

Ex. 26 a

- c) in full rehearsal sing pitches without rhythm, stopping and sustaining dubious 'chords' to check tuning.
- d) at speed (eg. bars 169ff.) awkward skips may be omitted initially to preserve a smoother line.

Ex. 26 b

- iii) rhythm – (most complex at start of movement 4) a possible, yet laborious aid might be the sub-division of every J beat into 3, gradually quickening pace in rehearsal (N.B. Stravinsky's own hint of this in the guide-lines of bars 270–71).

† Paul Steinitz, 'On Rehearsing a Choir for the Canticum Sacrum', The Score, Mar. 1957, pp.56 – 59.

- iv) expression - (and even full translations) deferred until later rehearsals.
- v) conductor's preparation - slow playing (preferably on the organ) of all choral harmonies innumerable times!

Steinitz offers two very pertinent points: '..... if one did not work hard at the Canticum between each rehearsal, the aural grasp of it was soon lost.....One wonders whether the average member of the audience needs to hear it as many times as we did to appreciate'.

Detailed remarks concerning a choir's preparation are offered in the present movement-by-movement analysis above and concern mainly the tracing of pitch aids (in the instrumental and vocal parts) and the accurate observance of the composer's notated cut-offs. Word accentuation must inevitably be secondary to musical requirements but excessive unmarked accents should be avoided at all times. One would hope that sufficient rehearsal time coupled with an existing well-drilled choir would take care of universal choral techniques such as vowel unification and the synchronising of consonants. Solo voice exercises may have to be applied to an amateur choral unit in preparation for the angular shifts encountered in individual vocal lines. The two and three-part choral textures in some movements further justify sectional rehearsals of the singers.

Over-all vocal ranges: S 12th C - - G flat
 A 13th G - - E
 T 13th C - - A flat
 B 9th B - - C sharp

Additional problems attend the combining of choral and instrumental forces (where again sectional rehearsals - of those instruments just involved in the canons - will be profitable and economical).

Rhythmic co-ordination affects the Virtues, eg. 5/8 in Spes mixes 2 + 3 and 3 + 2 at random across both choral parts and the wind accompaniments, each independent of the others (cp. bar 175). At ♩ = 144 the

conductor's two beats per bar will have to be ignored by one group or another save at the bar-lines. Bars 204ff. in Fides set a choral 2 + 4 + 2 against an instrumental 2 + 3 + 3. The tempo relationship of this same passage to the previous bars for instruments alone needs thoughtful practice on a conductor's part, $\overbrace{\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}}^3 = \overbrace{\text{♩}}^1 = 162$ (2/4 - 4/4). But perhaps most aired of the work's performance challenges is that of acoustical balance. The physical situation of the performance is a variable not only affecting dynamics but also simple communications between the conductor and the performing forces, especially the organist. Stravinsky cautiously reduces the number of performers in passages of extreme elaboration, notably the polyphonic Sections. Some loss of textual clarity must, however, be accepted in the latter (the problem being an historical one reaching back beyond the Council of Trent). The very light instrumental scoring of the canons perhaps makes the optional viola doublings an attractive aid for the singers. In considering such assistance the following factors should be borne in mind:

- i) Stravinsky wished the doublings to be used 'only if necessary'
- ii) the distinctive 'colour' of unaccompanied voices in movement 4 would be lost
- iii) the instruments may underline pitch variations in the choir
- iv) in resonant acoustics the total texture may become clouded.
- v) In less resonant acoustics the instruments may help considerably

The total number of singers must match the building and the dynamic finesse of a given orchestral ensemble. But the choir also has to cope on the one hand with the demands on accuracy of the polyphonic movements and on the other with the power necessary in the outer movements which are more fully orchestrated. There would indeed be a good case for giving the canons to a semi-chorus con-

taining the most musicianly voices. In the larger movements Stravinsky endeavoured to meet the characteristics of very resonant, Venetian-type buildings. Writing of Euntes Craft explains that:

'The acoustical principle which leaves the organ or bass instrument behind to absorb echoes is well observed in this movement. In the wake of each tutti Stravinsky sustains the bass and then pauses. The final chord is also sustained and, softly by organ, double basses and bassoons, after the cessation of the chorus and orchestra'.¹

Needless to say, without absolute rhythmic precision from all performers such acoustical precautions will be of no avail in that or the fifth movement.

(Note on Boosey & Hawkes miniature score (1956): the score's layout conveniently places solo, then choral voices above the full orchestra. In movements 1 & 5 and in Caritas bar 104 the organ part descends below range, perhaps indicating 16ft. pitch. Elsewhere, eg. bars 17ff., the lower octave sound is shown by use of 8b.... -- a publisher's inconsistency.)

The Canticum Sacrum will remain one of Stravinsky's most controversial creations. How, for example, can we reconcile such opposing descriptions as the following: '..... the graveyard of decomposed musical composition.....the work in which Stravinsky destroyed himself'.² '..... the most comprehensive and essential synthesis of elements it is possible to imagine at this particular stage in the evolution of European music'.³..... ? Setting aside the first's political bias and, to many, its definitely hasty prophecy, we nevertheless feel there something of the disquiet shown by even the staunchest of Stravinsky's admirers when they saw (and more especially heard) him turn to

1 R. Craft, op cit. p.38.

2 Sovetskaya Kultura, Aug.27, 1959(quoted in MQ, July 1962,p.351).

3 Roman Vlad p.185.

codecaphony. For what on paper seems bold evidence again for the composer's originality and wide-ranging intellectualism becomes in sound a perplexing, even confusing whole. (Smith Brindle ¹ was not at all impressed by the paper evidence even)

A balanced judgement is still difficult given the performing problems already outlined. The skilful orchestrator of the Russian ballets now produces an almost skeletal score in which the interest centres not on the timbre of the forces used but on the contrapuntal plotting of the serialist. Clarity in execution is therefore of the essence here. '.....the sound resulting from his scoring is harsh, austere, emaciated especially when compared to the music of the Gabriellis, Monteverdi, or Schutz, performances of which preceded that of Stravinsky's Canticum'. ² More disappointing for the choralist is the relatively unadventurous, and ungrateful, vocal writing in the choral sections. Some interest attends the various choral groupings in the Canticum (the absence of basses in Caritas, tenors and basses in Spes). But block dynamics in each movement reveal a somewhat staid, unemotional approach to choral expression. As in earlier works more detailed expression markings are lavished on the instrumental parts than on the vocal. The newer challenge to choirs is the fully serial sections, dangerously exposed in performances and presenting major problems of intonation. 'In Canticum Sacrum Stravinsky still displays a thinly veiled - at times concrete - lack of faith in the human voice that will not be fully overcome until Threni.....' ³

The Soviet critics take exception to Stravinsky's hard, unemotional

¹ op cit. p.599.

² John S. Weissmann, op cit. p.109 concerning the first performance of Canticum Sacrum in Venice.

³ William J. Dehning, op cit. p.10.

style which fails to evoke a warm response in the listener. It is true that the 17-minute score is uncompromising in its ascetic message and, as Steinitz suggested above, much of the work's impact is lost until we have enjoyed repeated listenings. Serialism in particular demands much of the audience and the Canticum Sacrum establishes a pattern of restraint ('humble with studied poverty' as Massimo Mila described it ¹) to be followed to a degree in subsequent choral works. The composer himself, speaking of the serial Septet and the Canticum comments: 'It is certainly more difficult to hear harmonically the music you speak of than my earlier music; but any serial music intended to be heard vertically is more difficult to hear'. ² Yet we can observe, after detailed examination, certain advances over earlier works in similar genre. The almost classical symmetry of form is impressive and makes this work an obvious template for The Flood of 1962. In the re-groupings of the choral forces we begin to see a greater variety of texture within one work than hitherto. And Brevi Motus has as much if not more evidence of word-painting than any other sacred choral piece before 1955. The listener simply has to accept a new, more concentrated form of presentation. Patient calculation, it seems, marks the composing, the performing and perhaps the hearing of the Canticum Sacrum.

1 Quoted in Vlad p.185.

2 CO. p.39.

Note on Choral-Variationem uber das Weihnachtslied 'Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her' by J.S. Bach, arranged Stravinsky.

Text: verse 1 of Martin Luther's Christmas hymn (1535) sung in German. For SATB (unison) chorus and orchestra (2fls., 2 obs., c. angl., 2 fags., c. fag., 3 tpts. in C, 2 ten. tbs., bass tb., hp., violas, d. basses).
 Duration: c. 10 mins. Order of composition:
 Vars. 1 - 2 Dec. 1955 (New York)
 Vars. 3 - 5) Jan.-Feb. 1956 (Hollywood)
 Chorale

Dedicated to Robert Craft. Published by Boosey & Hawkes, 1956. First performed 27 May 1956 in Ojai, California, conducted by Craft. The MSS. score bears the modest designation 'Mit der Genehmigung des Meisters'.

Bach wrote his set of canonic variations on this Christmas hymn for organ in 1746-47. Stravinsky orchestrated the original, adding counterpoint of his own to variations 2 and 3, using the same forces as those for the Canticum Sacrum to which it became a companion item in the Venice festival (13 Sep. 1956). Stravinsky begins his arrangement with a six-part brass version of one of Bach's chorale harmonisations in the Christmas Oratorio. He then gives the cantus firmus in variations 2 and 5 to various unison combinations of the SATB choir. These are given below together with the orchestral doublings for each variation:

Var. 2 SAB (opt. div. S and B in final bars)	1 muted tpt. (8ve. higher than sops.) 1 muted ten. trb. (in unison with basses) 1 ten. trb. (in unison with SA) in last 3 bars
" 3 ST (marked <u>sotto voce</u>)	div. violas (doubling S and T an 8ve. apart)
" 4 ATTB	1 fag. clef (doubling altos and tenor I) 1 c. fag. clef (doubling basses and tenor II) div. violas in 8ves. (doubling altos in 8ves.) div. d. basses in 8ves. (doubling basses in 8ves.)

Var. 5 SATB

2 obs.(8ve.higher than SA)
 c.angl.(in unison with SA)
 harp (in unison with tenors)
 div. d.basses (doubling
 tenors and basses)

Over-all vocal ranges: S dim.12th G* - D flat
 A perf.11th G - C
 T min.13th B - G
 B perf.11th G - C*¹

* 8ve. given as optional (Var.2 bars 22-23)

¹ optional doubling of altos (Var.2 bar 21)

The voices enter at bar 39 of Variation 5 with tenors and basses in octaves taking the inversion of the cantus firmus followed in stretto by the rectus in unison sopranos and altos. It is the only harmonic writing for the choir.

The vibrant and continuously unfolding orchestral texture is in marked contrast to the sparser sounds of the Canticum Sacrum. A relatively full instrumental ensemble is required in each variation so the unison voices are amply balanced provided the number of singers employed matches the dynamic range of the players. In fact, each choral movement's dynamic marking for the voices is piano or (in movement 3) sotto voce. The whole work, like its companion Venetian piece, pays homage to counterpoint and, given virtuoso wind players, makes an excellent short addition to a choral programme.

THRENI

Text: The Lamentations of Jeremiah (Vulgate - Chapter I:v.1, parts of v.2,5,11 and v.20. Chapter III:v.1-6, 16-27, 34-36, 40-45, 49-66. 1 Chapter V:v.1, 19, 21. The Hebrew letters which divide the text in chapters I and III are also set. Verse numbers coincide with those of the Authorised Version in English.) plus an opening Incipit (Incipit lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae) and a sung title to Chapter V (Oratio Jeremiae Prophetae), all main text in Latin. For SATTB (Basso II profondo) soloists, SATB chorus and orchestra (2 fls., 2 obs., cor angl., 2 cls., alto & bass cls., sarrusophone, 4 hrs., 3 trbs., flugelhorn, tuba, timpani, tam-tam, piano, celesta, hp., str.). Duration 35 mins.

Order of composition: opening up to word <u>Incipit</u>	29/ 8/57
" " " bar 65	25/ 9/57
<u>Vide Domine</u>	25/11/57
<u>Plorans ploravit</u>	27/11/57
(Information provided in SPD. pp.443-444.) Part I bar 11	1/12/57
106-72	14-15/12/57
179-87	20/12/57
189-90	22/12/57
191	24/12/57
193	28/12/57
204-230	Jan. 58
344-357	14/ 2/58
-383	23/ 2/58

Published by Boosey & Hawkes 1958. First performed 23 Sept.1958 at Sala della Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice conducted by Stravinsky.

Venice was again to play host to the premiere of a major Stravinsky creation. Like the Canticum Sacrum before it Threni was to have been unveiled at the Venice Biennale festival. In the event its first performance in the city in 1958 became a memorial to Alessandro Piovesan who had commissioned the canticle three years earlier and who died shortly before the opening of the 1958 Festival. There are also a number of musical links between these two sacred choral pieces. Each utilises choral and solo vocal forces supported by a large orchestra. Each has a symmetrical over-all plan largely dictated by the carefully chosen texts. An introductory announcement for two solo voices begins the Canticum ('Dedicatio') and Threni ('Incipit'). Threni adds a further duet to herald the final De

1 Chapter III, v.59 omits the original words 'Judica judicium meum'.

Elegia Quinta section. Both works use serial techniques, partial in the earlier composition and total in the present piece, and both supply singers with Latin translations of the Vulgate.

If the austere, hieratic quality of Threni is akin to that of the Canticum, the musical format is entirely original. Threni is marked by substantial passages of unaccompanied (solo) vocal music and elsewhere by very sparse use of the very large orchestra. The work may thus recall Schutz's sacred music (especially the a cappella Passion settings) or Renaissance tenebrae performances. In the sixteenth century the Lamentations of Jeremiah were sung at Tenebrae (Matins on the last three days of Holy Week), elaborate polyphonic settings of some verses being set alongside plainsong/ solo versions of others. Stravinsky was familiar with the choral Lamentations of Palestrina, Tallis and Byrd according to his Conversations (p.35) and though he felt their influence was not evident in his music it might aid the listener's (and performers') appreciation of the piece if tenebrae service practice is understood. The composer explains¹ that 'I had hoped my Mass would be used liturgically, but I have no such aspiration for the Threni, which is why I call it not Tenebrae Service, but Lamentations'. (The elegies of Jeremiah are called threni in the Vulgate.)

The selection of verses from chapters 1, 3 and 5 of the Lamentations of Jeremiah gives the work a balanced tri-partite structure after the introductory Incipit for soprano and alto soloists. A further subdivision of the central De Elegia Tertia into the three sections Querimonia, Sensus Spei and Solacium enhances the arch-form which, beginning with the Canticum Sacrum, was to become a hallmark of the late choral works. Stravinsky emphasises the balance of the sections of Threni by, for example, incorporating choral speech in both De Elegia Prima and De Elegia Quinta and giving

¹ CO. p.136.

the same soloistic bias to both the Querimonia and Solacium verses.

An unusual effect in the first and third elegies is the choral enunciation of the Hebrew letters which connect the verses of the original text in acrostic fashion. Successive strophes begin with letters of the Hebrew alphabet, De Elegia Tertia having one letter repeated for each of three verses. A total of twenty letters are employed, all set chorally (ALEPH, BETH, and RES occur in both Elegies I and III). De Elegia Quinta omits them. Significantly the Sensus Spei section makes an extensive centre-piece to Threni and uses eight of the letters, each repeated three-fold. In this section all repeats are identical unlike the varied settings of Querimonia and Solacium. The treatments range from full choir, four to six bars long in the first movement, down to two voice parts, sometimes on a single chord, in the central sections. Common to most is the mode of attack - generally an initial accent followed by a diminuendo. WW.(p.503) compares their effect to that of 'illuminated initials embellishing a manuscript'. They also seem to the present writer akin to the bell-chords (albeit instrumental) in The Wedding, the Symphony of Psalms and the Mass.

John Weissmann rather casually employs the term 'oratorio' in his report of the Venetian premiere.¹ This may seem a somewhat inflated label and the non-narrative text does not justify the term technically. However, at 35 minutes duration Threni is Stravinsky's largest sacred choral work and employs the longest text, with the possible exception of The Flood. It also requires the most diverse forces, both vocal and instrumental. For the musical analyst its significance rests on the fact that it is the composer's first fully serial composition representing a considerable stylistic advance on the Canticum Sacrum. This fact may place Threni at the peak of inaccessibility for the choral singer or choral conductor but such specialists

1 MQ. Vol.45, 1959, p.104.

must also acknowledge that in this piece Stravinsky unfolds his complete catalogue of choral effects not exceeded in any other single work for the same medium.

Plotting the serial direction of the Lamentations is beyond the scope of the present discussion and is already extensively covered by Vlad (pp.213-222) and WW.(pp.498-502). But despite the new work's total serial organisation Stravinsky still creates rows of an individual character bearing as much the stamp of the composer as that of any 'traditional' Webernesque models. Repeated notes are still indulged in. Tonal, and especially triadic, intervals appear. Tonal harmonies are hinted at through combining transposed orders of the series.¹ All these features are demonstrated in the duet opening the piece where, according to the composer himself², the first thematic idea for the whole work is contained:



The brevity of the choral components in the music makes it unnecessary to survey the movements of Threni separately. Therefore, the portions of text for choir only follow with translations. Specific details of the score are then indicated before the over-all features of the choral writing are assessed.

(The verse numbering below follows that of both Vulgate and Authorised versions of the Old Testament. 'A' and 'b' indicate first or last portions of incomplete verses.)

DE ELEGIA PRIMA

CH. 1

1. ALEPH. Quomodo sedet sola civitas
plena populo! Facta est quasi vidua
domina gentium: princeps provinciarum
facta est sub tributo.

How doth the city sit solitary,
that was full of people! How is
she become as a widow! She that
was great among the nations, and
princess among the provinces, how
is she become tributary!

1 qv. Vlad p.215.

2 ibid. p.214.

- 5a. HE. Facti sunt hostes ejus in capite, inimici ejus locupletati sunt. Aula Dominus locutus est super eam propter multitudinem iniquitatum ejus. Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions.
20. RES. VIDE, Domine, quoniam tribulor, conturbatus est venter meus, subversum est cor meum in memetipsa quoniam amaritudine plena sum. Foris interficit gladius, et domi mors similis est. Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death.

CH.3 DE ELEGIA TERTIA
(Sensus Spei - Perceiving Hope)

22. Misericordiae Domini, quia non sumus consumpti; quia non defecerunt miserationes ejus. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.
23. Novi diluculo, multa est fides tua. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.
24. Pars mea Dominus, dixit anima mea; propterea expectabo eum. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.
40. NUN. Scrutemur vias nostras, et quaeremus, et revertamur ad Dominum. Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.
41. Levemus corda nostra cum manibus ad Dominum in coelos. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens.
42. Nos inique egimus, et ad iracundiam provocavimus; incirco tu inexorabilis es. We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.
43. SAMECH.et percussisti nos; occidisti, nec pepercisti.and persecuted us; thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied.
44.ne transeat oratio.that our prayer should not pass through.
54.Perii.I am cut off.
57.Ne timeas.Fear not.

(Solacium - Compensation)

64. THAU. Reddes eis vicem, Domine, juxta opera manuum suarum. Render unto them a recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands.
65. Dabis eis scutum cordis, laborem tuum. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.
66. Persequeris.et conteres eos. Persecute and destroy them.....

DE ELEGIA QUINTA

CH.5

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | <u>Recordare, Domine, quid acciderit nobis.</u> | Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us |
| 19. | <u>Tu autem, Domine, in aeternum permanebis.</u> | Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever |
| 21. | <u>Converte nos, Domine, ad te. . . .</u>
<u>innova dies nostros, sicut a principio.</u> | Turn thou us unto Thee, O Lord,
.renew our days as of old. |

De Elegia Prima

- Bar 19-22 SATB harmonic setting of ALEPH. Initial pitch must come from soprano soloist in bar 18 (the supporting full strings are harmonically unrelated). NB. rhythmic displacement of syllables in bar 22.
- 27ff. unison. Choral speech parlando sotto voce. NB. frequent metre changes within a ♩ = 180 tempo and the rhythmically blurred chords of the bass instruments which introduce and punctuate this passage.
- 42ff. SA unison. Initial pitch cued two octaves lower(!) by pedal point in horn II. NB. overlapping of text and musical motifs with each successive phrase. Metre changes continue but Stravinsky provides subsidiary (dotted) bar-lines to indicate conductor's subdivision of longer bars. Accompaniment for tremolo strings oscillates about three pitches which regularly coincide with the voices' openings of phrases.
- 52-56 monotone ending at variance with all accompanying pitches (upper strings, flugelhorn and tenor I soloist).
- 62-65 SATB harmonic setting of BETH. More difficult initial pitch. Second tenors double basses at cadence.
- 76ff. unison. Choral speech. NB. rests giving random separation of words.
- 88ff. SA unison repeats 42ff. with new words.
- 108-111 SATB setting of CAPH. NB. subtle string doublings in accompaniment.
- 114-119 SATB setting of RES. The aspirate, marked in the score RES(H), is very pronounced in Stravinsky's own recording. 1
- 123ff. unison. Choral speech. The Stravinsky recording reveals a downward inflection, especially at the ends of bars 123, 125, 127. NB. indication abbassare la voce in bar 136.

1 Phillips ABL 3329 (Mono) of 1960.

142ff. SA unison repeats 42ff. with a changed pattern of rests.

154 a single note break in the monotone line.

De Elegia Tertia

166-193 (Querimonia) ALEPH, BETH, VAU, ZAÏN (each three times) always scored for SA plus three trombones, either as single chords or as cadences.

179 & 181 NB. breath marks after each of first two VAU settings.

194-321 (Sensus Spei) contains the work's longest continuous choral passages

195ff. octave pairings of SB and AT, initial pitches cued by soloists in previous bar.

204,209,214 TETH single octave TB.

217ff. LAMED set each time for TB with a following pedal B flat sustained by altos accompanying the basso profundo soloist.

231ff. SATB homophony. NUN intoned by basses. Altos divide with lower voices doubling tenors in unison. Triplet groupings and syncopations make for rhythmic interest.

239-241 semitone spacing of chant-like S and A lines.

242-245 SATB in rhythmic unison double solo voices.

246ff. SAMECH for TB followed by rhythmically varied canonic writing for SA.

261,268,275 AIN for unison SAT.

282,291,301 TSADE for unison TB.

309 'voce del Coro' (1 alto, 1 bass) reinforce solo sextet.

310,314,318 COPH ('the aspirate PH prolonged without pitch') for TB in octaves. NB. misprint (bar 314 bass requires F sharp) in 1958 Boosey & Hawkes miniature score.

321 cp.309

322,328,336 (Solacium) RES(H) for TB. Stravinsky's own performance strongly marks the aspirate printed here.

344,348,357 SIN for SA, the last a three-note melisma.

358ff. THAU for SATB (minimal cue for initial pitches). Between the three utterances AB and ST voices respectively double the ensuing solo parts.

De Elegia Quinta

386ff.)

392ff.) unison. Choral speech parlando sotto voce heralded each time by a 'bell-chord' from oboes and piano.

405-417 SATB homophony mainly in rhythmic unison. The part-writing results in a number of vertical (but not horizontal) tritones. The final bar rests on an E flat minor chord (the whole work closing two bars later with an A minor chord for four horns).

*

*

Though Threni achieves a degree of over-all symmetry or organisation comparable to that of the Canticum Sacrum this is less obvious aurally to both performers and listeners. The greater length of the 1958 work plus its reliance on totally serial procedures (always taxing on aural memory) may partly explain this. A participating chorister will simply note the reserving of choral speech for the first and last main sections and the dominance of the Hebrew letters in the central passages. The orchestral sounds are varied throughout with no notable repeated ideas. There is a certain balance between the first and third portions of the third elegy in that both have substantial amounts of unaccompanied singing. Querimonia consistently employs SA chorus with brass accompaniment for each of its letters although the melodic and harmonic details change. The most obvious repetition of material, including features of melody, rhythm and orchestration, is that of the SA choral phrases of De Elegia Prima beginning at bars 42, 88, and 142 respectively. The composer seems to be at pains to emphasise each verse of text in this movement by setting the words to choral speech first and then repeating them to the unison choral melody. Between these three choral sections two unaccompanied solo tenors intone additional portions of verses (Diphona I and II) to complete a symmetrical five-part structure corresponding with the five verses or part-verses of text. Querimonia progresses cumulatively by

adding one more solo singer for each verse sung between the choral letters, culminating in a double four-part canon. In Sensus Spei the longer text provides no obvious shape to the musical form save that repeats of letters elicit exact musical repeats. In this section and in Solacium the roles of solo and choral voices closely overlap, frequently doubling each other. The entire work ends with similar massed choral and solo forces after more choral speech – without the word repetition of De Elegia Prima. In Stravinsky's CBS performance the three Elegies follow each other without break, though there is no attacca marking at either bar 165 or 383. Any over-all formal unity is achieved by the intellectual means of serial integration.¹ Musical considerations therefore dominate the structure more than textual. However, the regular alternation of solo and choral vocal textures does reflect the performance style of the Renaissance Tenebrae service.

The choral groupings employed here are very varied exploiting most possibilities within the bounds of an SATB ensemble. The tutti chorus with divided altos at 231ff. fails to provide five real parts because one or other alto line doubles its adjacent voice part, soprano or tenor. The six solo singers augmented by two voices from the chorus yield the densest harmonic texture vocally (up to six real parts) at bars 309 and 321. Elsewhere the Hebrew letters are sung by various pairings of the choir in harmony or in octaves. Full unison is reserved for the choral speech of the first and last main movements. Perhaps the strangest feature of the choral texture in Threni is the relative absence of imitative polyphony of the strict kind seen both in the Canticum Sacrum and in the church music of the high Renaissance which fostered this

¹ cf. Vlad's tracing of serial links between sections of Threni (op cit. pp. 219-221).

liturgical form. Imitation of pitch but not of rhythm occurs between soprano and alto chorus parts presenting a row in two halves between bars 247 and 252. Serial canons are given to the solo voices¹ - with some complexity in *Querlmonia* - but in the broken quartet textures in which pairs of chorus parts double their solo counterparts towards the end of *Solacium* no imitation appears. Conductors should carefully note here the composer's cautionary dynamic markings (*non f* (*accompagnando*)) for the doubled parts leaving solo alto and bass II accented and *forte* to balance the larger forces. The full choir passages range from the staggered utterances of the five letters in *De Elegia Prima*, through the much doubled part-writing beginning *Sensus Spei* (195ff.) to solidly homophonic strains ending that section and again ending the whole work. 195 begins with sopranos and basses in octaves and the subsequent alto/tenor entry presents a complete row, with notes repeated, also in octaves (and unisons where typical octave transpositions occur). A considerable degree of rhythmic unison marks the *tutti* passages and the pivotal character of individual lines in passages like 195ff. and 321ff. again harks back to the chant-like choruses of Stravinsky's pre-war choral output. The choral textures

Ex.28

S: *et re-ver-tamur ad Do-mi-num.....*
 A: *Scrutemur vi-as nostras et quere-mus ad Do-mi-num..... la-re-mus cor-da nos-tra-cum manibus*
 T: *et re-ver-ta-mur ad Do-mi-num*
 B: *NU-N..... NU-N.....*

¹ And it must be the solo writing which mainly justifies Weissmann's view that 'the Webernian dodecaphony seems to have been completely amalgamated with the early forms of liturgical polyphony' (op cit.p.109).

here are much less affected by part crossings than was the case in the Canticum Sacrum.

Angularity, so typical of 'Webernian dodecaphony', created much of the part crossing in the 1955 work but less tortuous lines seem to be the norm in Threni. A strong feature of the melodic profiles is the anchoring of certain phrases to a pivotal repeated note or notes (qv. Ex.28 above, as also SA 239ff., SB 197 and SA 42ff. where a two-note first violin accompaniment supports the unison chorus). A related characteristic is the extension of a single note to form a monotone chant or pedal-point (S A 51-56, AT 197-198, A 218-219). The greatest angularity is created in the soprano line, bars 241-245, and the bass line in the final pages. All voices enjoy for the most part a comfortable tessitura while maintaining and, in the case of the bass part, extending the over-all ranges used in the Canticum Sacrum:

S	maj. 13th	A	- F sharp
A	perf. 12th	F	- C
T	maj. 10th	E	flat-G
B	min. 13th	Fsharp-D	

More taxing in Threni is the problem of voice-leading. The sparseness of the choral writing, especially the settings of the single Hebrew letters, means that the choral singers must relate their pitches to surrounding instrumental sounds or to those of the solo voices (qv. the bar-by-bar commentary above, pp. 146-8). It would seem paramount to employ soloists possessing ~~total~~ confidence in pitching and to have them available for as many choral rehearsals as possible. There is always difficulty for choirs converting from the timbre of a rehearsal piano to actual orchestral sounds. Therefore, particularly in De Eleola Tertia, choral entries, often a single chord, must take their cues from the solo singers. This is nevertheless a daunting task for all but professional vocal ensembles with their preponderance of singers with absolute pitch. Below (Ex.29) is an example of how unhelpful the single pitch cue can be, coming after an entire phrase of


Ex.30

S
A
T
B

in-no-va, in-no-va di-es, nost-ros, si-cut a..... prin-ci-pi-o.....

(4+12)

Elsewhere conflicting orchestral pitches challenge the intonation of the chorus. The SA letters in De Elegia Prima produce strong discords with the accompanying trombone parts. Once again it is the brevity of the choral passages rather than the difficulties of serial progressions which undermines the vocal tuning and make Threni harder than the Canticum Sacrum in this respect.

Stravinsky provides a share of rhythmic hurdles for both conductor and conducted which mark an advance in complexity over previous sacred choral pieces. Metre changes are very common throughout the score with some unusual extended bars such as 197 (in 20/8 time) and 200 (in 1/8 + 3/4 time!). In the longer bars, including those in De Elegia Prima (Ex.31), use is made of dotted bar-lines as visual aids to performers coping with the varying rhythmic groupings and consequent shifts of accent. Such shifts are not confined to irregular meters such as 5/8. The 8/8 bar in Ex.31 below later changes to γ  (91) and back again (145). Dotted bar-lines are the

Ex.31

(parlando)

CORO

(37) princeps provin-ci-a-rum fac-ta est sub tri-bu-to

OS A


non f



(42) quo-mo-do se-det, quo-mo-do se-det so-la, se-det so-la ci-vi-tas

sole guides in some of the unaccompanied solo music. In Conversations

(p.35) Robert Craft asked the composer why he dispensed with bar-lines in the Diphonas and Elegies of this work. Stravinsky replied that

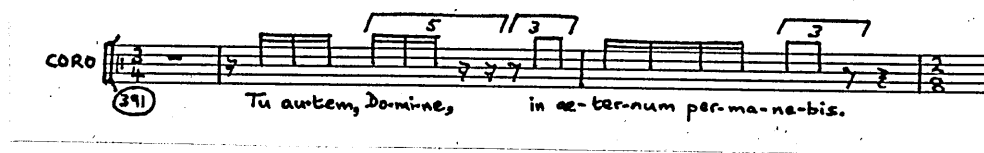
'the voices are not always in rhythmic unison. Therefore any bar lines would cut at least one line arbitrarily. There are no strong beats in these canons, in any case, and the conductor must merely count the music out as he counts out a motet by Josquin. For the same reasons I have also written half notes rather than tied notes over bars. This is perhaps more difficult to read, but it is a truer notation'.

Ex. 28 above illustrates the polyrhythmic nature of some passages and in rehearsals one voice part at a time must master its own rhythm before any complete ensemble singing is attempted. With considerably fewer instances here of strongly accented individual notes it becomes easier for the conductor of such passages to heed Stravinsky's exhortation and maintain a simple, flowing beat in accordance with the composer's time signatures and metronome marks. The orchestra faces the challenge of similar cross-rhythms with the additional problem of counting many more rests than the voices. Bars 405 to the end offer the only substantial rhythmic unison for the full choir. Precision is demanded for cut-offs (bar 171 tied over to a quaver for the consonantal cut-off in bar 172) and syncopated attacks (e.g. . In bar 175). Less clear in duration are the prolonged aspirates called for at, for example, bars 310 and 314, 246 and 249, all very obviously emphasised in Stravinsky's own performance on record. Conductors should simply allow the natural decay of a single breath on these unvoiced, pitchless sounds. The final rhythmic challenge to the whole vocal ensemble is in the unison speech chanting which, in both De Elegia Prima and Quinta, has to be synchronised with often syncopated instrumental accompaniment (Ex. 32). Clarity of diction is all important in any unison work for massed voices, along with an avoidance of excessive accents here. Rehearsal at the exact metronome markings indicated throughout the score¹ must be

¹ NB. tempo indication  =  (♩ = 180) at the outset of the choral speech (bar 27).

assured before full instrumental and vocal forces are

Ex. 32



combined. When the latter occurs conductors' cues for strong instrumental accents must not influence the singers' maintaining of an even flow of words at the sotto voce levels marked. The speech notation as above is very clear rhythmically and is employed consistently in both outer movements.

In two instances (bars 247ff. and 360ff.) speed changes may be construed as aspects of word-painting - though if so, as subtle as would be expected from the pen of this composer. 247 changes $\text{♩} = 90$ to $\text{♩} = 120$ at the mention of anger and persecution, while at 360 $\text{♩} = 184$ compares with a previous $\text{♩} = 54$ to underline a somewhat vengeful text. The first of these instances also demands additional accents on individual notes. This is unusual in the work as a whole where the present writer is forced to agree with Weissmann's sentiments that the rhythmic framework is

' less spontaneously vital, embodying a less compelling drive and energy than we were accustomed to from the compositions that preceded his recent dodecaphonic-Webernian phase Not that his schemes have become less intricate; on the contrary, the loss of primordial power is substituted, though hardly compensated, by a contrived sophistication reminding one of the schemes and combinations of certain of the medieval isorhythmic compositions'.¹

If rhythmic complexity makes demands on ensemble co-ordination at least Stravinsky again provides comfortably balanced, chamber-like orchestral textures to support the voices. Threni's instrumental forces are vast and include violins and clarinets, unlike its major forerunners in this medium. Yet the players are deployed in an often pointillistic way which, while not overpowering solo or choral voices, offers scant security of pitch

¹ op cit. p.108.

to the singers. Perhaps the commonest timbre repeated in Threni is that of staccato pedal points from instruments such as piano, harp, double-bass and sarrusophone which, given a resonant acoustic, can help underpin vocal intonation once the singers' ears adjust to the low pitch. The trombones of Querimonia offer the traditional ritualistic sounds amidst the the quasi-Renaissance unaccompanied solo voices. However, the timing of the brass chords simultaneously with the choral Hebrew letters, coupled with the instruments' harmonic independence of the voices makes their contribution less helpful to the singers other than colouring the total sound. The position of these players ought to be near enough to the choir to aid synchronisation but distant enough not to adversely affect choral intonation. Pedal points, largely remote harmonically from the choral parts, are the basis of the orchestral writing in Sensus Spei. Solacium has all but its last Hebrew letter supported by strings which this time enter ahead of the voices by one or two chords in each case. Vocal pitches can be related with practice to these cue chords. Pointillism and a strong hint of Stravinsky's famous 'bell-chords' (such as in bars 385 and 391) accompany the first part of De Elegia Quinta before the final bars silence all but four horns who weave an organ-like web up to the last consonant chord. Across the four horn parts conductor's can trace doublings of most notes sung from bar 405 to the end and they should draw singers' attention to crucial pitch aids. The earlier summary description of the whole of Threni (pp. 146-8 above) cites other examples of instrumental cues where these exist(!). Again it must be stated that the choir-trainers' problem here is in converting the choir's identification of piano cues in rehearsal to the more colourful orchestral palette of the actual performance. Instruments should be named and if possible noted in vocal scores alongside the pitches which are most vital.

The orchestra does not in any dramatic way underline the specific

sentiments of the text. This is another work reflecting the composer's cool and dispassionate response to words. Appropriately, in Threni, this approach recalls much of the mood of Renaissance sacred music and perhaps further indicates the ritualistic concept of so much of Stravinsky's sacred choral music. Psychologically as well as acoustically Threni invites performance in church. However, one might have to accept some loss of detail in a more reverberant atmosphere. Indications in the score such as abbassare la voce (bar 136) for the first movement's final choral speech will demand the utmost clarity of diction en masse akin to the actor's stage whisper. All the choral speech is marked parlando sotto voce. Elsewhere most choral entries have dynamic marks provided and where these are missing (eg. 68ff.) conductors should match voices with supporting instruments and with similar preceding phrases. The Hebrew letters consistently require a sforzando effect and Stravinsky makes liberal use of > and < stress markings according to the note values involved. At 231ff. NUN in the basses carries > followed immediately by ° over the final consonant and though this is not explained in any footnote it must be assumed to be a nasal resonance on the sustained pedal note as opposed to the same sign used to indicate falsetto in the solo bass part at 218. In De Elegia Prima the recurring SA choral unison bears the recommendation ben articolato non f just as the solo ensemble plus chorus soloists in Sensus Spei have ben articolato in p (eg. 309). The chorus lines doubling soloists in Solacium have the verbal instruction sempre marc. stacc. ma non f commencing at bar 360. Most choral phrases are too short to require breath or phrase marks, the long 20/8 bar at 197 and the phrase divided at 406-7 being the exceptions. Protracted crescendi and diminuendi are typically (for Stravinsky) absent. One such marking emphasises the dramatic, accentuated SA phrase at 247-248 whilst that beginning in 195 simply balances existing parts against two new entries.

Footnotes in the score along with Stravinsky's own performing example emphasise the required extended aspirates as noted in the above summary. All such markings, coupled with those for the solo voices (tenor I con voce strascicante at 219 and basso profondo's falsetto in 218), provide a more detailed description of the composer's vocal intentions than appeared in earlier choral scores. It is vital in this lengthy and still somewhat bland work that conductors do not miss any of these effects in performance, for they are brief and spasmodic. If the two passages at 247ff. and 360ff. referred to above (p.155) are really samples of subtle pictorialism then we must commend Stravinsky's restraint and economy in such devices whilst ensuring that such isolated instances make their maximum impact.

The appearance of the score of Threni gives us a visual notion of the composer's basic concept with voices dominating. As WW. states (p.503)

'there are no tutti (orchestral) passages. This leaves the chorus and soloists continuously in the foreground so that the general impression is of a varied choral pattern of chanting and lamentation and polyphony, from which occasionally arises an anonymous solo interjection - such as the alto singing 'Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in eum' and the tenor responding in strangled tones ('con voce strascicante') to the deep bass at the 'Ut contereret sub pedibus suis omnes victos terrae' passage in the Sensus Spei section'.

The chamber-like realisation of parts of the piece is indicated by departures from the traditional layout of the score. Vlad chooses an excellent example of this at bars 217ff. Here the score reads, from top to bottom, flutes, horns, ATB chorus, tenor I solo, clarinets, bass II solo, piano and timpani. The intention seems to be to group voices with matching instrumental timbres.

Threni is a big, complex score which still sounds restrained, almost intimate in its paring down of the numerous forces, vocal and instrumental, required. To many listeners and performers the very serial

organisation of melodic and harmonic material creates a severity of mood in which unbridled expression of an emotional kind would be totally foreign. Thus this work is in total keeping with the composer's now customary reserve. Austerity here is also in keeping with the mood of the very large text - a plaintive, self-purging testimony - and (though Stravinsky himself plays down this connection) with the liturgical precedents of Renaissance Lamentations. The musical character of the piece is maintained uniformly throughout its duration without the massive contrasts afforded in Canticum Sacrum by tutti movements alternating with accompanied solos markedly different in dynamic levels. 'Threni differs.... from the delicate tenderness of Canticum Sacrum in its cold, archaic aloofness perhaps indicative of Stravinsky's quest for a universalized manner of expression' ¹ If there is something inconsistent, almost experimental in the stylistic contrasts of the Canticum then the integration of Threni will be seen as an advance. Boris de Schloezer, the Russian critic, wrote to Stravinsky on Nov.14, 1958 expressing the view that

' the grandeur of this score, its formal unity, austerity, beauty, its rejection of all compromise, all 'effects', all sensual seduction, all personal sentiment, gives proof once more, after your Mass and cantata to St. Mark, of the continuing youthfulness of your genius'. ²

Also complimentary was Michel Butor ³:

' the resonances which in the Symphony of Psalms have transversed the entire spectrum of classical forms and reached as far back as Byzantine music, are even stronger in Threni'.

But resonance of another kind elicits criticism from Stephen Walsh ⁴.

'Choral sonority is much strained by dissonant block passages of this kind (bars 405ff.), which obstruct the natural resonance of the voices and pull

1 Weissmann, op cit. p.108.

2 SPD. p.447.

3 'Stravinsky le Meconnu', Artes magazine, Sept.27, 1960(quoted in SPD p.449).

4 op cit. p.50.

them off pitch'. This is one instance of a general characteristic of these late Stravinsky works which Walsh returned to again in a review ¹ of a London performance of Threni. Unquestionable difficulties are put in the way of performers. In this concert the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Gennadi Rozhdestvensky found the distant separation of all the vocal forces behind the large orchestra undermined precision of attack and rhythmic co-ordination in unison passages. It led Walsh to speculate on the obvious current neglect of the late works by asking the question 'is it that their idiom hasn't yet been fully mastered by non-specialist performers, which means that they need much more rehearsal than the less radical works of the neo-classical period?' This is undoubtedly true, especially given the concentrated, relative brevity of the sacred choral pieces and the often inevitable involvement of amateur, and therefore part-time, choral singers.

It is also worthy of note that (as Paul Steinitz remarked about the Canticum Sacrum, p. 134 above) instant communication with the listener is scarcely possible in such intense music. There would indeed be a very strong case for repeat performances of these works within single concerts, except for the possible saturation effect of hearing the same words twice. Yet it is the involvement of singers which makes the performances so precarious and again leads this writer to question the suitability for the choral medium of serial music and attendant features such as klangfarben orchestration and pointillist rhythmic tendencies. It is obviously these very features which undermine the flow of vocal tone, the security of pitching and the communicability of the texts. Hence the difficulty of making a work like Threni convincing in performance - despite its being the most

1 Observer, Mar.9, 1980.

ambitious work of Stravinsky's in terms of vocal effects used. For

Threni offers us:

- unisons
- polyphony
- homophony
- 2,3,4 and 5 part combinations of the SATB
- ensemble/sustained chord clusters (eg. bar 245)
- syllabic and (slight) melismatic underlay
- choral speech
- two languages
- more detailed expression markings

It further offers us a wealth of continuous melodic writing, of which the soloists take the lion's share.¹ But the melodies are still angular, their combination results in 'dissonant block passages' and their rhythms create arbitrary verbal accents. Whilst we must accept these characteristics as peculiar to Stravinsky's genius, representing a refusal to be hide-bound by historic conventions (at the same time admitting some influence of very individual, ancient models), we must acknowledge that all composers' creations have to be re-created in performance. It is the intermediaries' skill or otherwise in the process of re-creation which determines music's impact. Threni is a monumental intellectual concept on a scale towering above most of the post-Rake's Progress output. The danger is in the monument turning to lifeless stone.

1 '.....richest of all, perhaps, is Threni, which proliferates melody on a scale exceptional by any standards, and most exceptionally so by Stravinsky's own'. Donald Mitchell, The Language of Modern Music, Faber, 1966, p.121.

A SERMON, A NARRATIVE ANDA PRAYER

Text:(New Testament Authorised Version and English prose) Sermon - St.Paul's Epistles to the Romans (8:24,25) and to the Hebrews(11:1 and 12:29). Narrative - The Acts of the Apostles(6:2,4-12,15 and 7:1,51-2, 54-60). Prayer - extract from 'Four Birds from Noah's Ark', a prose devotional work of 1609 by Thomas Dekker I (1570?-1632). All texts in English. For AT soloists, speaker, SATB chorus with divisions and orchestra (fl., alto fl., 2 obs.,cl., bass cl., 2 fags.,4 hrs., 3 tpts., 2 ten.trbs., bass trb., tuba, 3 tam-tams, piano, hp., strs. - specified as 8, 7, 6, 5, 4). Duration c. 16 mins. Composed 1960-61 and completed 31 Jan. 1961 in Hollywood. Dedicated to Paul Sacher with the third movement headed 'In memoriam the Reverend James McLane (+1960)'. Published by Boosey & Hawkes 1961. First performed 23 Feb. 1962 in Basel with Hugues Cuenod as tenor soloist and the Basler Kammerorchester conducted by Paul Sacher.

The new Paul Sacher commission again produced a work as original in concept as it is profound in spirituality. It further employs a colourful palette not only of instrumental but also of vocal timbres and despite its brevity creates almost as much variety of effects from its 79 choral bars as did Threni two years earlier. However, the technical demands on both performers and listeners are considerable and, in the minds of concert promoters, perhaps out of all proportion to the scale of this concise offering. This is regrettable as A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer is a major summary of Stravinsky's last style. Incorporating features of earlier choral pieces it forms a vehicle for the deepest expression of religious values. It communicates via large forces with intimate, chamber-like restraint and given technical assurance in performance does so with

1 Spelt 'Dekkar' in the Boosey & Hawkes score.

crystalline clarity.

Of the three movements suggested by the title only the first and last employ choral voices. The pitchless solo narration is confined to the central number and the alto soloist to the last two movements. The Sermon divides into two very similar halves each containing one phrase for the solo tenor and most of the ingredients for the choral writing which make this, along with Threni, the most adventurous of all Stravinsky's works in this medium.

Colin Mason labels the eight-section plan of the Sermon ABCD AECD,¹ the refrains ending each half being identical. The latter commence with pitchless parlando (notated ♮ or ♮̇), progressing through approximate pitches (specified by ♮̇ signs) to fully supported cadences on the words 'is faith'. Stravinsky's own CBC recording² is interestingly precise in pitching both the signs used for the chanted declamation. He observes his written ♮̇ pitches precisely and in addition brings SA voices (♭) in on E flat in both refrains and TB on middle C, both entries being tonally independent of the accompanying strings but providing a smooth transition onto the subsequent written pitches. There is a dramatic dynamic contrast between the sotto voce of the parlando phrases and the marcato of the voiced cadences. Even more emphatic is the final word 'fire' concluding each refrain ff with SATB voices in high tessitura supported by sforzando string harmonics. The complete final phrase 'And our Lord is a consuming fire' illustrates a special feature of the vocal arranging in this work. It involves splitting a sentence or phrase between two or more voice parts so that no single voice performs all the words. It produces a vividly

1 'Stravinsky's New Work', Tempo No. 59, Autumn 1961, p.6.

2 SBRG 72272.

angular line between the two soloists at the climatic stoning of Stephen in bars 179-185 of the Narrative. But in the first movement refrain quoted (bars 31 - 34) it simply echoes the klavierfarbenmelodie technique of Schoenberg and is used for the same colouristic effect. It demands limpid rhythms across the composer's shifting metres and absolute assurance of intonation.

Ex. 33

♩ = 100

S *Alto* { The substance of things hoped for
voice is faith.

A $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$

A

T *Alto* { the evi-dence of things not seen is faith.
voice

B $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$

(27)

Tempo I? ♩ = 72

S *unis. ff*
And our Lord. fire.

A *div. f*
And our Lord fire.

B *f*
And our Lord fire.

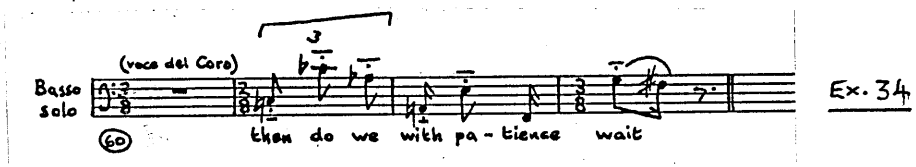
T $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ a con sum ing fire

B *f*
is a fire

(31)

The somewhat arbitrary fragmenting of the text by this means plus the resulting jagged melodic profile rife with major 7th intervals may seem unpalatably self-conscious to the conservative listener and unnecessarily taxing to the non-professional choral singer.

The staggered texture of the choir's first entries at bars 121f. presents all the usual hurdles of serial intonation (horizontal tritones and vertical minor 2nds and major 7ths). In early rehearsal such a phrase as the following ¹ is easily simplified by octave transposition of the extreme notes (and



similarly with the compound intervals of the basses in the Prayer at bars 244-252, Ex. 34 below). Yet not only patience but also an acute ear and an athletic vocal technique will be vital to restore such passages to their actual intended sound. No canonic imitation exists to speed up the learning process in the polyphonic passages - which dominate the Sermon - and indeed the process is extended by Stravinsky's rare use of five and six part textures in the first movement. Security of pitch is further endangered by the relative absence of cues in the instrumental and solo vocal parts of both movements 1 and 3. Singers without a reliable sense of absolute pitch must search long for sometimes remote assistance in this matter and the rehearsal piano (or better, organ) will be no substitute for hearing the actual surrounding timbres. Where it is provided the orchestral support for the chorus is sparse and harmonically independent. Its pointillistic nature at least prevents it distracting singers from their own pitching!

¹ Marked Basso Solo (voce del Coro) in the Boosey & Hawkes miniature score but performed chorally on the composer's CBS recording.

As in Canticum Sacrum (bars 270ff.) Stravinsky makes use of visual aids to rhythmic accuracy in the present work. The three instances occur in the final movement (bars 246, 249, 250) where the chorus wends its way between a metric canon in the solo voices and (augmented) in the instruments. Syncopation and triplet subdivisions of the $\text{♩} = 72$ beat add complexity to the opening of the Sermon, especially given the six-part choral texture and staggered entries which allow for little verbal synchronisation. This last point may seem irrelevant or at best a faint echo of Counter Reformation reaction to Renaissance polyphony. In fact the composer's rhythmic filigree work in this movement causes words to appear in different vocal lines at very close distances, sometime less than half a beat apart.

Ex. B5

The musical score for Ex. B5 is a six-part setting of a text. It features the following parts and lyrics:

- Alto Solo:** one of Thy Lambs — to whom Thou Wilt — Say, "Come — You Bles — sed,"
- Tenor Solo:** My Gra — tious Shep — herd — for one of Thy Lambs — to whom Thou Wilt — Say, — "Come —
- CORO alti:** (no lyrics shown)
- CORO bassi:** Yet make me My Gra — tious Shep — herd for one of Thy Lambs to whom Thou Wilt Say, —
- C.B. (Hp. Piano 8 bas.):** (no lyrics shown)
- T.T. 2:** (no lyrics shown)

The score includes various musical markings such as triplets, syncopation, and dynamic markings like *mp* and *pizz.* A circled number "244" is visible at the bottom left of the score.

A curious restlessness with attendant feelings of shaky ensemble is thereby created along with considerable rehearsal problems. The homophony at 'is faith' is most apt. By comparison movement 3 is substantially chordal in texture for the massed voices, overlaps whole phrases of text for the

soloists' rhythmic canons and moves at a stately ♩ = 69 pace. This speed enables the conductor to direct in crotchets throughout the Prayer, the minim triplets being accommodated on the first, fourth and sixth quavers. (Stravinsky's own recording achieves far from precise ensemble in the difficult passage between bars 244 and 252, qv.Ex.35.)

The chorus begin and end the work at monochrome mf. But A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer has, for Stravinsky, an unusually wide dynamic range in the vocal music. The central solo movement is operatically dramatic with detailed dynamic markings enabling the singers to match the vivid orchestral writing. The principal climax here, 'and stoned him', sets the soloists in unison and is heralded by the angular, fragmented phrase described above which here gives an illusion of a vicious, enraged crowd. Such realism does not unfortunately justify the majority of the choir's split phrases, but an effect comparable to a rolling piano chord is achieved in movement 1 by the staggered setting of the climactic word 'fire'. The tenors and basses here break at the composer's breath mark leaving the sopranos to top the chord (qv.Ex.33). Detailed markings such as the solo tenor's piu tosto f at bar 172, the sopranos' poco sfp at 251 reinforcing a dissonant entry, and various crescendo and diminuendo markings throughout the solo and choral lines are unusual for Stravinsky whose precision is normally lavished on the instrumental parts and skimmed in many of the vocal scores. The final 'Alleluia' here is movingly restrained. To the solemn intoning of the three pitched tam-tams the choir, in block chords, detach the four syllables at gentle mf level, the last syllable cadencing with a diminuendo marking.

Accepting the technical virtuosity of the choral writing which clearly sets this work beyond the scope of most amateur singers, and accepting the terseness of expression which precludes easy assimilation on a single hearing, we have here music which rewards close study by

performers, listeners and historians alike. It is a summary work sharing with Threni a complete catalogue of vocal effects (save for unison melodic writing). Stephen Walsh wrote that 'vocally this is one of the most varied of all Stravinsky's works'.¹ Notated choral speech appears alongside fully serial themes. Textures are primarily polyphonic but resolve in impressive homophony in the final bars. Divisi choral scoring allows for five or six independent parts in the Sermon and bar 61 seems to employ the opposite extreme being Basso Solo (voce del Coro).² Rhythmic invention recalls the Stravinsky of earlier Russian days although the meditative nature of the triptych is foreign to impulsive, driving tempi. Syllabic underlay is as much a feature of this English text setting as it is of the other serial choral works, most of which use Latin, but some emotional melismas are granted the soloists (qv. bars 89, 201-227, 229, 240ff.) as well as heralding the final choral 'Allelula' at 262ff. Above all, the drama of the choral writing is heightened by pictorial dynamics, a strong, disjunct melodic line and fulsome use of the wide vocal ranges seen in Threni:

S	maj. 10th	C	-	E
A	aug. 12th	A flat	-	E
T	maj. 13th	C	-	A
B	maj. 13th	F	-	D

A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer draws together technical and emotional features of many earlier works. The very subject of faith, hope and charity was exercised in Canticum Sacrum whose formal symmetry we have noted foreshadowing the present piece.³ Donald Mitchell⁴ pairs these two works 'both rich in melodic content' and links

1 Tempo No.81, Summer 1967, p.51.

2 qv. footnote p.165.

3 WW.(p.513)also sees the first movement of Movements as a model for the two-section Sermon.

4 op cit.p.121.

both to Threni in their mutual involvement with serial polyphony. To Colin Mason¹ 'the vocal writing is in the euphonious contrapuntal style of the canons in Threni'. The description 'euphonious' might be questioned by many and this writer feels that despite the old Stravinskian freedoms of serial note repetition and triadic shaping of some vocal phrases the total effect is far from comfortable or predictable in a traditional vocal manner. Angularity, vertical dissonances and the idiosyncratic word-splitting across various vocal lines guarantee unease. The breaking up of the text between voices of the choir had a precedent in Scene Three of Persephone (1933-34).² This work, together with Babel (1944), also employs a Narrator, and Babel plus the Cantata of 1951-52 pioneered Stravinsky's use of an English text. Pitchless chanting for the chorus was heralded by Threni, where the composer also showed more varied groupings of the voices within the normal SATB texture.³ But perhaps the most moving retrospect is the way the concluding bars of the 1961 work echo the final hymn from the Symphony of Psalms (1930). The same ritualistic rocking accompaniment supports the choral homophony of the word 'Alleluia' where sighing rests prompted Stravinsky himself to allude to the earlier work in DD.⁴ Vlad (p.233) sums up the passage:

'Then comes the final 'Alleluia' chorus, in which serial constellations arrange themselves into diatonic halos silhouetted against the dark pendulum-like ostinatos of the three tam-tams, the double basses, piano, and harp. For a moment we seem to see the Stravinsky of the Symphony of Psalms, though here the direct, staggeringly impressive power of the Symphony has been decanted, tamed, sublimated'.

Thus we are reminded of the hieratic quality of so many earlier sacred pieces as well as being directed forward to the reverential conclusion of

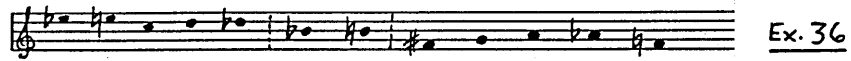
1 op cit.p.5.

2 qv.WW. p.386, Ex.84.

3 The many connections with the Lamentations of Jeremiah are not surprising in view of the fact that Stravinsky saw A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer as a New Testament companion-piece to the older work (as implied in his letter to Paul Sacher on 7 August, 1961, quoted in Melos, April 1962, p.124).

4 qv.footnote to p.58 .

the 1966 Requiem. It is noteworthy that A Prayer is in fact designated 'In memoriam' and also that it was in 1960 that MC. (p.116) referred to chromaticism as a device for pathos, quoting Stravinsky's favourite examples of this from works by Lasso, Willaert, Hassler and Purcell (In the midst of life we are in Death). Chromaticism helps shape the main series used in A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer and quoted by Vlad (p.231):



Ex. 36

In purely vocal terms this work again underlines Stravinsky's totally individual approach to word-setting. The general spirit of the text may be matched more realistically here than in many of his other choral compositions, especially in the post-1950 style, but the technical means for fitting words to notes is as personal as ever. The language has made no difference to syllable accentuation, nor to the placing of rests, nor, as we have seen, to the text's arrangement across the four or more voice parts. The arbitrary word rhythms of the Latin compositions seem to justify a similar freedom for English¹ (and perhaps also for French if the Persephone example in an earlier footnote is taken as representative). Stravinsky's philosophy of the syllable as all-important (see Chapter 3) is borne out everywhere. Let John Tavener have the last word on this piece. 'Stravinsky will insist that words are abstract sounds, but how the music "Issues from the skies" on the word "Faith" in Sermon, Narrative and a Prayer'.²

1 qv. Ex. 35 above.

2 Tempo No.81, Summer 1967, p.26.

ANTHEM (43 bars)

Text: 'The dove descending breaks the air', Part IV of 'Little Gidding' in Four Quartets by T.S. Eliot. For SATB & cappella chorus. Duration 2 mins.10secs. Dated Hollywood, California, 2 January 1962. Dedicated to T.S.Eliot. First published by Faber & Faber as an appendix to the English edition of Expositions and Developments and later by Boosey & Hawkes. First performed 19 Feb., 1962 in Los Angeles conducted by R. Craft. '.....I would like very much to set the two beautiful verses from 'East Coker'(sic.). They are certainly "verses to be sung", and the standard, four-part hymn choral is the way to present them, I think. Such a piece would be only a minute or a minute-and-a-half long - like my Epitaphium (for flute, clarinet and harp) - or twice that because the second verse would repeat the same music. If I undertake to do this, it will be as a tribute to you.....'

(Stravinsky in a letter to T.S.Eliot, 26 Dec.1959¹)

Symmetry is again the hallmark of this brief piece. Two stanzas of the poem are set, the first beginning with SA voices only, the second with TB only. The final three lines of each verse use the same music for full chorus to balance the text's repetition of the phrase 'fire by fire'. The whole derives from the following note-row presented initially by the sopranos:



Ex. 37

This, however, is heralded one bar earlier by the altos' retrograde series (followed in the same voice part by the inversion at bar 4). The work presents all the usual permutations of the original row (eg. I sopranos bars 9, R basses bar 17, RI sopranos bar 20) with Stravinsky's typical repetition of notes often in an oscillating pattern (eg. sopranos bars 6 - 7, altos 10 - 11). An interesting ordering of the voices occurs in the opening of the second part. Commencing in bar 26 the basses offer the O series accompanied by the tenors' R version. The latter moves directly into the

¹ Quoted in SPD. p.542.

inverted series at bar 28 until one bar later the incomplete inversion crosses to the basses on the word 'Name', while the tenors take on the remainder of the basses' original row. The final section with women's voices presents the complete series in the alto line much protracted by repetition/oscillation while the sopranos sing both O and RI rows.

The serial counterpoint with some octave displacements of individual notes creates a freer choral texture than the other a cappella choruses of Stravinsky's earlier period. Yet he finds room even here (bars 29 - 31) for a brief passage of homophony in two parts complete with syllabic underlay and a limited melodic range akin to the Three Sacred Choruses. There is generally little melisma (altos bars 3 - 4 mainly) but unlike the serial choruses of the Canticum Sacrum there is a greater degree of rhythmic variety shown here. Syncopations are pronounced and divorced from the normal accentuation of the language (EX.38). Punctuation by rests extends to the splitting of verbal phrases, as in sopranos bars 19-20, and tenors 21 - 22 above, and even to the dividing of syllables ('on - ly', tenors bar 38).

EX.38

(21)

The strictness of much of the serial counterpoint also results in a large number of part crossings such as appear in the above quotation. Unaccompanied, voices need practice in hearing the effects of such

crossings and conductors may well have to prepare themselves at the organ to appreciate the resulting harmonies.¹ Viewed horizontally the individual lines exemplify the composer's 'tonal' approach to intervals in serial melodies. Rehearsed slowly the singers have time to hear these intervals with fewer wide leaps, tritones and major 7ths than in the models of the second Viennese school. Pitch cues for beginnings of phrases are usually provided clearly in other parts. The first soprano entry and the combined entry of sopranos and altos at bar 33 are the most difficult in context. Other intonation hurdles include the repeated notes for the bases (bars 23-4, 41-2) and tenors (bars 30-31) where loss of pitch must be guarded against.

Vocal ranges: S aug.11 C - F sharp
 A aug.11 G - C sharp
 T min.10 D - F
 B dim.12 G sharp - D

Stravinsky again limits his use of expression marks. The Anthem maintains a piano dynamic level save for the forte climax on the word 'terror' in bar 8 - a rare instance of Stravinskian word-painting. The stress marks in the soprano line of Ex.38 also recur in the equivalent bar (41) towards the end and must be intended as an aid to balance where the two upper voices cross. Bar 25's diminuendo seems to emphasise the end of verse feeling though no comparable marking appears in the final bar.

It is a combination of severe (though not completely strict) serialism and the eschewing of overt expressive nuances that make this piece another testimony to the composer's natural, clinical restraint. Anthem is an important work for being the only a cappella specimen of his 12 - note style² and for being one of the few sacred works with an

1 Both published versions are in open score with no keyboard reduction.

2 Brevis Motus Cantilenae in the Canticum Sacrum provides seven bars for unsupported SATB. It is significant that this passage is also high in rhythmic and textural interest.

English text. It treats the choral Instrument with more respect than the other pieces in the same serial genre and provides a happier variety of choral textures than the other unaccompanied works. William Austin considers this one of the composer's 'most thoroughly graspable works, a piece worthy to stand beside a Bach chorale or an anthem by Gibbons'.¹ But despite the composer's deep admiration for the power of Eliot's poetry (and the fact that Eliot himself suggested this text to the composer, who had been invited to write a hymn for a new English hymnal) the words remain secondary to the musical thought. The verses' internal rhymes and metres are virtually lost to the music. Yet, relative to his other output, there seems to be some feeling for the structure of the poem and even the semantics of individual words, as seen in the mirror treatment of 'fire by/or fire' and the dynamic colouring of 'terror'. What appears superficially to be arbitrary word treatment is on closer inspection a personal and deeply intellectual response to a text. It exemplifies what Stravinsky felt when criticising Andre Gide: 'He had expected the Persephone text to be sung with exactly the same stresses he would use to recite it The tradition of poesia per musica meant nothing to him'.²

1 William Austin op cit. p.531.

2 MC. p.75.

REQUIEM CANTICLES

Text: extracts from the Proper of the Requiem Mass (Introit, Dies Irae, Libera me) in Latin. For A B soloists, SATB chorus & orchestra (picc., 3 fls., alto fl., 2 fags., 4 hrs., 2 tpts., 3 trbs., timpani, xylo., vibraphone, bells, piano, celesta, hp., str.). Duration 15 mins.

Order of composition: bars 166 - 174.....Mar. 1965
 163 - 175 in score
 153 - 158
 176 - 183

ExaudiPreludeDies Irae

Tuba mirum.....Jan. 1966

Rex tremendae

Libera me.....May 1966

Postlude.....Aug. 1966

(finished at Hollywood 13/8/66)

Published by Boosey & Hawkes 1967. First performed 8 Oct. 1966 by Elaine Bonazzi, Donald Gramm, Ithaca College Choir and New York Concert Symphony Orchestra at McCarter Theatre, Princeton University, conducted by Robert Craft.

Stravinsky was preoccupied with the deaths of a number of major figures in the early 1960's. This resulted in a series of memorial pieces, most notably Elegy for J.F.K. (President Kennedy), Variations (Aldous Huxley), and Introitus (T.S. Eliot). Throughout the composer's career he had offered his personal musical tributes on many occasions.¹ But as WW.(p.153) remarks, the Introitus 'served as a kind of "lead-in" to his final major work, the Requiem Canticles of 1965-66'. This work was commissioned in memory of Helen Buchanan Seeger, a benefactor of Princeton University and of its music department. The score bears her name as dedicatee and her son Stanley met the costs and the expenses of the concert. The conductor described the sketchbook of the work as 'a necrology of friends who died during its composition. The composer once

¹ For example: Funeral Dirge 1908 (Rimsky-Korsakov), Symphonies of Wind Instruments 1920 (Debussy), In Memoriam Dylan Thomas 1954.

referred to these pasted-in obituaries as a "practical commentary".

Each movement seems to relate to an individual death'.¹

The work is again conceived serially - '.....Intervallic designs which I expanded into contrapuntal forms and from which, in turn, I conceived the larger shape of the work. The two-fold series was also discovered early on, in fact while I was completing the first musical sentence'.² Stravinsky continued

'.....so was the work's instrumental bias an early idea; my original title was "Sinfonia da Requiem" and I did not use it only because I seem to have shared too many titles and subjects with Mr. Britten already. The idea of the triangulate instrumental frame - string prelude, wind instrument interlude, percussion postlude - came quickly after, and I then began to compose the Interlude which is the formal lament'.

Each of the three instrumental portions is marked by the use of a repeated motif or refrain and the now customary balance of form is further attained by separating these portions with equal numbers of vocal movements totalling 80 bars before and 85 after the central Interlude.

There are only four choral movements in the total of nine and out of 303 bars for the entire work just 69 involve choral singing. The groundplan may be shown by the following table (after Routh³):

Bars	Movements	Scoring
1 - 54	Prelude	Strings only
55 - 100	Exaudi	Chorus (homophonic)
81 - 102	Dies Irae	" " + parlando
103 - 135	Tuba mirum	Bass solo + brass & bassoons
136 - 202	Interlude	Wind & timpani
203 - 228	Rex tremendae	Chorus (polyphonic/homophonic)
229 - 265	Lacrimosa	Contralto solo + orchestra
266 - 288	Libera me	Solo quartet(voices/horns)+parlando full chorus
289 - 305	Postlude	Wind/keyboards/tuned percussion

1 Robert Craft, Afterword to Arnold Newman's photographic study Bravo Stravinsky! quoted by WW.(p.153).

2 TC. p. 98.

3 op cit. p.128.

Routh points out ¹ (p.127) that the words requiem aeternam had already been set in the Introitus of 1965 and in the present work Stravinsky merely uses the final verse of the Introit psalm. Anthony Payne's comments on the choice of texts follow from this:

'Significantly, four of these (six vocal movements) use the Dies irae text, a thirteenth century Latin hymn whose persistently dramatic and memorable poetic imagery thus dominates the canticles. . . .there is no use made of the Requiem Aeternam sections which colour most settings. . . '2

This last observation is not strictly true for, almost imperceptibly, Stravinsky inserts Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis in the middle of the choral speech beginning at bar 273, being the last sentence of the Libera me.

Serial analysis is not our present concern (WW. p.539 quotes two series for the work copied from the composer's own charts) but the Requiem Canticles are generally acknowledged to sound less severely dodecaphonic than most of their author's serial output.

'Like his other recent compositions which involve singing, the Requiem Canticles present a clear, flexible and concise formal articulation, while the internal structures seem to have a generally diatonic/modal savour, and a tonal polarity which is easily recognisable, even if it cannot easily be defined or fitted into normal analytical schemes'. 3

It is worth quoting further from Anthony Payne who does give technical justification for this reaction:

'(The work) uses several note rows, all of which have melodic segments in common (the three-note nucleus F - C - B, for instance, with which the work opens is traceable through most of the movements), 4 but there is no consistent attempt at 12-note saturation'. Hexachordal series dominate much of the music giving a feeling of 'extended tonality or bitonality'. 'the row of the first movement typifies this by its hexachordal division into F/C, C sharp/G sharp key centres: F - C - B - A - B flat - D, C sharp - D sharp - G sharp - F sharp - E - G. This series is most systematically used in the Dies irae and in the central Interlude, the first part of the work to have been composed '5

1 *ibid.* p.127.

2 Tempo No. 81, Summer 1967, p.10

3 Roman Vlad, p.252.

4 *qv.* Vlad's schematic representation of the opening harmonies(p.252-3)

5 Payne, *op cit.* p.10.

The text for the choral portions of the Requiem Canticles follows with translation. Details of the score are then summarised before a general assessment of the choral writing.

PRELUDE

Exaudi orationem meam, ad te
omnis caro veniet.

Hear my prayer; all flesh
shall come to thee.

Dies irae
excerpts

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla.

Day of wrath, that day shall
dissolve the world in ashes,
as David and the Sibyl testify.

Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando Iudex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus!

What a trembling there will be
when the Judge shall come to
try all things truly.

INTERLUDE

Rex tremendae majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvaboratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis.

O King of dread majesty
who freely savest the redeemed,
save me, O fountain of
goodness.

Libera me, Domine, de morte
aeterna, in die illa tremenda,
quando coeli movendi sunt et
terra:

Deliver me, O Lord, from
everlasting death in that
dreadful day, when heaven
and earth shall quake, when
thou shalt come to judge the
world by fire.

Dum veneris judicare saeculum
per ignem.

I tremble and am sore afraid
for the judgement and the
wrath to come.

Tremens factus sum ego, et
timeo, dum discussio venerit,
atque ventura ira.

When heaven and earth shall
quake.

Quando coeli movendi sunt et
terra.

O that day, that day of wrath,
of woe and of tribulation.

Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis
et miseriae, dies magna et
amara valde.

Requiem aeternam dona eis
Domine, et lux perpetua eis.

Eternal rest grant them, O
Lord; and let perpetual light shine
upon them.

Libera me.

POSTLUDE

*

*

Exaudi

Bar 59

SAT unaccompanied single bar entry with string cues in bar 58 aiding ST voices. A chord cluster unhelpfully surrounds the altos' initial F sharp.

66 - 69

SAT homophony with some doubling of SA parts, flutes I and II. Alto flute in bar 65 offers the only helpful cue (to tenors), though the initial choral entry is a repeat of bar 59. 'Orationem' is treated to the same chant-like oscillation (bar 67) as the same word in the Symphony of Psalms, mov. I bars 28-29. Such repetition is again peculiar to Stravinsky's brand of serial melody-writing and is a marked feature of the present work.

71 - 76

SATB strict homophony, the advent of the basses being cued by horn I which, together with harp, doubles selected notes throughout this short entry.

Dies irae

82 - 84

SATB homophony doubled by 2 trumpets and 2 trombones. TB take their starting pitches from their notes in bar 76. SA should best relate their pitches to those of the upper strings in 80, considering the rapid tempo and generally low pitch of the instruments in bar 81. 83 is marked 'come eco', its dramatic pianissimo helping voices to first hear their new pitches heralded by 3 muted horns.

86

SATB homophony again doubled. SA repeat bar 82, TB retune. NB. anacrusic variant on 82's rhythm (deceptively the instruments in 85 exactly copy 81).

88ff.

Tutti parlando sotto voce - choral speech at same $\text{♩} = 68$ tempo as 81ff. Despite metre changes of 3/8, 2/4, 5/8 the quaver provides a constant beat.

97 - 101

SATB homophony repeating 82ff. but commencing anacrusically after the brass quartet's pitch cues (not that helpful at this speed) and moving the basses up a semitone on the third beat of 97. Accent marks are this time added to the first four chords.

(Robert Craft's recording I strongly accentuates Dies irae on both appearances and additionally makes a pronounced rinforzando effect on each of the 'echo' syllables both times. His choral speech is very deliberate and dynamically matched more to the instruments' forte than to the indication 'sotto voce'.)

I CBS 72808 using CBC Symphony Orchestra and original choir and soloists.

Rex tremendae

- 203ff. Staggered entries in the order ASTB. Altos may gain (rapid) pitch cues from the bassoons ending the previous Interlude. Trombone I doubles the second note sung and further doubles the tenor entry. Slight part crossings result here and in the subsequent homophony. 210-213 present tenors with a typically angular 12-note line rife with major 7th leaps. Scant instrumental doubling is here provided by trumpet I and trombone I. Voice parts occasionally double one another, eg. STB on C sharp in 206 and the staggered entries at 210 are all on C sharp (cued by flute II in bars 208-9).
- 216ff. SA unison (with some octave displacements). Sole accompaniment from independent counterpoint of trumpet I.
- 222 - 226 SATB polyphony with very sparse support from trumpet I and trombone I (not always doubling voices). Pitch 'anchors' include oscillating repeats of individual notes in A and T parts and the basses' pedal D sharp 223-226, strengthened at the 5th by A sharp in the sopranos from 224. NB. regular minim movement of bass line.

Libera me

- 266ff. SATB homophony for 4 chorus soloists doubled by four muted horns and accompanied by remaining chorus in unison pitchless parlando. The latter has no rhythmic notation save dotted lines corresponding to the main beats of the quartet. At $J = 170ca.$ the choral speech (offering repetitions of parts of the sung text and adding the final sentence Requiem aeternam. . . . luceat eis which was not heard in the Introit movement) must be rapid - a free-rhythm crowd effect, as in the Craft recording. All speech must gather on a final, notated Libera me against the final unison B sharp pause of the quartet and horns. The solo texture is homophonic until the T/B, A, S leads in bar 285. A steady rate of harmonic change with pivotal notes linking most chord changes and multiple repetitions of chords to accommodate the text create an illusion of liturgical chant. A quartet possessing secure relative pitch and positioned where they can hear the instruments will cope with the movement's demands on intonation.

This is the only complete text taken from the Requiem service.

Pierre Souvtchinsky felt '...the Requiem Canticles make a conscious and pre-meditated departure from all the clichés of music of mourning and from their hidden meanings and intentions'.¹

Yet here the composer makes one of his closest responses to his chosen text in matters of form, vocal layout and even of expressive word-painting. The dramatic Dies irae divides naturally (and traditionally) into the sections which Stravinsky chooses as his separate movements. He further follows tradition in allocating the Tuba mirum to a male soloist and Lacrimosa to a higher solo voice. The text is presented in its correct liturgical order, albeit drastically pruned, and this means departing from the otherwise perfectly symmetrical construction of the work in that the solo verses occupy different positions in each half. Through-composition would describe the approach to each choral movement where the texts unfold continuously. Where there is a repeat (the words Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra in the last movement) Stravinsky provides an exact repeat of the vocal and instrumental setting (except for the changing choral speech above the music and the omission of stress marks on two chords). He artificially creates repetition and an impressive tri-partite form in the initial Dies irae section. The title words and their instrumental support are brought back at bar 97 with an extra horn added and a rhythmic stretching of the final note values to form a written-out rallentando lead, attacca, into the Tuba mirum. Perhaps the most curious textual repetition occurs at 210ff. where the tenors repeat the words of the previous phrase (Rex tremendae majestatis) simultaneously with new words in the other three voices, words which the tenors manage to complete in the same phrase length.

Something of the same varied vocal scoring is evident in the

1 Thoughts on Stravinsky's Requiem Canticles, Tempo No.86, Autumn 1968 p.7.

Canticles as is found in Threni. Most common is a solid homophonic texture for four voices. This is reduced to SAT for the opening Exaudi, requires solo voices for Libera me and nowhere exceeds four real parts. Rex tremendae breaks up the text in polyphonic, though certainly not imitative, fashion and its central Salva me, fons pietatis is introduced by unison SA voices. Additionally we see two types of speech chanting. The rhythmically notated parlando between 88 and 93 for unison chorus is the same as that employed in Threni. But the rapid parlando in p throughout the Libera me movement has no notation other than indications of the conductor's beats and therefore produces a free murmuring of a most dramatic kind without overpowering the solo quartet. Part crossings are minimal as a result of relatively smooth melodic profiles.

The 1966 work again looks back to Threni in the restraint of its horizontal lines. The section-by-section description above refers to both monotone, chant-like repetitions within individual lines (Libera me especially) and to oscillations across two pitches (such as bars 67 SAT and 223-225 AT). Tenors gain more angular parts, the widest intervals being contained in Rex tremendae.

The over-all vocal ranges are:

S	perf. 11th	D	-	G
A	perf. 11th	A sharp	-	D sharp
T	aug. 9th	F	-	G sharp
B	aug. 12th	F	-	C sharp

Like Threni there are problems of pitch security where most choral entries are separated by substantial orchestral and solo vocal passages affording slender cues. Some possible aids to voice-leading are indicated above. In all cases there remains the difficult problem of attuning singers' ears to individual instrumental timbres rather than that of a rehearsal piano. Where present the instruments do assist voices by doubling and a choir should have copies marked with instrumental cues. Sectional rehearsals unaccompanied and with extreme pitches transposed by the octave should improve intonation. Confidence will also be gained by recombining

sections of the choir in various two and three-voice groupings, pointing out all the time any incidence of unison pitches between voice parts. As rhythm is less of a problem for the choral forces practice speeds can be varied until pitch accuracy is assured. Among the 'tonal' characteristics of the horizontal lines are chord shapes (eg. T 73-75, S 206, A 210ff.) and intervals of a perfect 5th (eg. B 205, ST 222). Less helpful are augmented 5ths and diminished 4ths (frequently some combination of the notes D sharp and G, qv. Ex. 39), though enharmonic re-naming of notes may ease such difficulties.

Ex. 39

S *(f)* Sal-va, sal-va me, fons pi-e-ta-tis.

A *(f)* Sal — va, 5 sal-va me, fons 4 pi — e — 5 ta — tis. 4

T *(f)* Sal-va, sal-va me, fons pi — e — ta — tis.

B *(f)* Sal — va — me, fons pi — e — ta — tis.

(222) Sal — va — me, fons pi — e — ta — tis.

Harmonic asperities are harder to conquer and the choir-trainer needs to have many unusual chords fixed in his ear. The last chord of EX.39 above is a case in point. There may be fewer vertical tritones compared with Threni but major 7ths and all kinds of 5ths abound. In lengthy passages these could be approached more easily whereas isolated bars like Ex.40 offer little scope for aural preparation. The spacing of the choral parts is always comfortable with only a few instances of part crossings but many of shared unison pitches. Most of the block

A musical score for a vocal and piano arrangement. The vocal part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics "di - es il - la" are written below the staff. The piano accompaniment is written on two staves, with the left hand in the bass clef and the right hand in the treble clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Allegretto". The score includes dynamic markings such as "f" (forte) and "p" (piano). The score is numbered "86" in a circle at the bottom.

Ex. 40

chord passages have at least some instruments doubling the voices and conflicts between choral and orchestral forces are minimal (bars 206–207 illustrate some tension between SATB voices and three flutes in pulsating chords). A suitable climax to the Libera me movement is achieved by gradually widening the spacings of the four-part chords before resolving the harmonic clashes onto a final unison. The same movement has a tellingly slow rate of harmonic change (averaging one chord per bar in bars ranging from 3/4 to 13/4 time) in keeping with the chant-like character of the singing.

Metre changes are common throughout the Canticles and especially in the last and longest choral movement. Here the lengthiest bars, in 9/4, 11/4, 12/4, 13/4, are subdivided by bracketing notes according to verbal accentuation rather than arithmetical divisions. Such subdivisions are stated next to the time-signature and aid the eyes of singers and players, indicate the conductor's beats, the pacing of the speaking chorus and the word stresses of the four soloists. The verbal flow thus achieved is remarkably

Ex. 4.1

Coro
Cutti parlando in *P*
mf sempre

LIBERA ME, DOMINE, DE MORTE AETERNA, DOMINE, IN DIE ILLA TREMENDA: LIBERA ME, DOMINE.

S
A
T
B

CORD
4 Soli


Li - be - ra me, Do - mi - ne, de mor - te ae - ter - na, -

(266) *mf sempre*

smooth for Stravinsky whose word-setting is so often eccentric.

Syllabic underlay dominates all the work's vocal writing, though it is perhaps significant that the solo contralto is treated to a vividly pictorial melisma on the one word lacrimosa! Only the soloists have complexities such as short note-values, syncopations and false syllable accentuations.

Other than the snappy Dies irae chords the choir has no note-value shorter than a quaver. Metronome speeds are clearly indicated and govern whole movements without awkward changes of pace en route. The speeds easily

accommodate the voices and diction should therefore be clear at all times save for the (deliberately) rushed parlando mutterings at Libera me. The work's predominantly homophonic choral textures mean a considerable degree of rhythmic unison between the voices and the comfortable tempi also ease the synchronising of singers with instruments. Cut-offs, as always with Stravinsky, need care. In Exaudi all but the last phrase-ending are indicated by commas on the bar-lines (ends of 59 and 69). At 76 the final 't' consonant may be placed in the rest which starts bar 77 for the strings. In the sung portions of Dies Irae voices and accompanying brass must match rhythmically whilst in Rex tremendae final 's' consonants precede bar-lines followed by rests (cp.207, 213, 221). However, the final phrase only is notated beyond the bar-line  (225-226) which may indicate that formerly a prompt cut-off is required rather than a consonant-in-the-following-rest treatment. Craft's recording bears this out in the whole of this movement.

The orchestra for this work is large but notably omits oboes and clarinets. It is never employed tutti and even the three purely orchestral numbers emphasise only certain timbres - strings, wind and percussion respectively. 'Stravinsky is predictably sparing and incisive in his use of colour, thinking in blocks of homogeneous sound which are juxtaposed or superimposed to give successions of bright primary sounds'.¹ The voices are well served in that there is plentiful doubling by instruments but never by a large number which might upset the dynamic balance of the complete ensemble. Solo instruments more commonly support the singers. The latter lack clearer cues in advance of choral entries and rehearsal pianists must ensure that vital instrumental pitches are heard in the correct

¹ Anthony Payne, op cit. p.11.

octaves (especially double-bass and flute notes) as preparation for hearing the eventual orchestral timbres. Considerable atmosphere can be attained through the instruments, such as the crack of timpani and piano announcing Dies irae, the trumpet fanfares of Tuba mirum and the church-organ sound of four muted horns assisting Libera me.¹ Synchronising choir and orchestra rhythmically is much less of a problem here than in Threni but the Requiem's two solo movements are much more complex in this respect. All voices, both solo and tutti, must be carefully placed to assist rhythmic ensemble and to facilitate the identification of pitch cues. Because of the delicacy of the orchestration the choir need not be large and may thus be accommodated nearer the players and conductor than is normally possible. This writer would even advocate a side-by-side staging of voices and instruments if the performing area were wide enough. This would bring all performers equidistant from conductor and listeners.

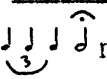
Dynamic and other expression marks are fully provided and in the case of the former carefully observe the need to balance voices and accompaniment. All instrumental parts are dynamically scaled down to match the voices (eg. fp brass against f voices at Dies irae, mf flutes against f voices at Rex tremendae). Accent marks, which are few, still seem a little arbitrary, as compare the two appearances of the words Dies irae to near-identical music, one with accents one without. We have already noted from Craft's performance that 'sotto voce', bar 88, describes the character of the parlando rather than its automatic volume level. Libera me on the other hand specifies tutti parlando in p.

So the composer's final large-scale work was appropriately a Requiem with some elements common to a Mozart or a Verdi but others,

1 WW. (p.541) claims that Stravinsky originally intended the use of a harmonium here and changed to horns for the final rehearsal.

from the choice of texts onwards, unmistakably his own. It also appropriately summed up his approach to composition in general and to choral music in particular. It is at once unique and retrospective. Its homophony and monotone chanting particularly smack of Russian-style liturgical pieces, the Three Sacred Choruses and the later Mass. The bell chords (literal) in the Postlude recall the same period.¹ Routh² sees the vocal/instrumental antiphony of Exaudi as reminiscent of the Agnus Dei in the 1948 Mass and the oscillating 'orationem' as similar to the Sanctus theme of the same work. He finds further similarities between the noterows of the Canticles and other serial works. The first row shares an emphasis on 4th and 5th intervals with the series used in Introitus and in the second series (introduced in the Interlude from bar 169) 'the reiterated notes. . . .are reminiscent of the Elegy for J.F.K.'³ Walter White links the two 1965 pieces when referring to the Libera me movement:

'Developing an idea Stravinsky had already adumbrated in his recent Introitus, the chorus contributes a background of dark parlando mutterings. . . .while the orchestra sounding like a harmonium (shades of Rossini!) provides a simple wind accompaniment to the soloists' recitative'.⁴

If Rossini seems worlds away from Stravinsky then one cannot deny the similarities between Verdi's Requiem and the present work. Both emblazon the Tuba mirum with trumpet fanfares, both indulge in unmeasured chanting of the words Libera me⁵ and both end their settings of those words with the same  rhythm. From The Times of London, 11 October 1966:

1 'It is an instrumental apotheosis that recalls and can only be compared with the end of Les Noces'. Eric Salzman, MQ Vol.53, 1967, p.83.qv.p.103 above concerning bell chords.

2 op cit. p.127.

3 ibid. p.128.

4 Stravinsky's Requiem Canticles, Tempo No.79, Winter 1966-67, p.15. Rossini's harmonium appeared in his Petite Messe solennelle (1863).

5 A similar effect occurs with 'Pleni sunt coeli' etc. in the Sanctus of Britten's War Requiem (1962).

'There are occasional correspondences with passages in works by Stravinsky The phrasing of the repeated chord that frames the separate sections of the Interlude (the first part of the Requiem Canticles to be composed) recalls the similar phrasing that is so characteristic of the 'Wind Symphonies' chorale. The return of the trumpets half-way through the Tuba mirum echoes the Messenger's flourish in 'Oedipus Rex' when he bursts on the stage to announce Jocasta's death, and in the Exaudi movement the final phrase of the chorus is interlocked with the orchestra ritornello in a similar way to the close of the Agnus Dei in the Mass.

. the new Requiem Canticles, though brief, are of great originality and invention, variety and contrast, and are likely to prove his most impressive and accessible serial work to date'.¹

The Requiem Canticles are constructed serially and exhibit the same clinical paring down of materials as the other religious works from Canticum Sacrum onwards. We can again perceive a hieratic quality most suitable for a text of mourning, the whole clothed in ritualistic timbres ranging from Masonic brass to Sanctus bell.² Yet there is not here the intellectual, chilly reticence of the earlier works but a sometimes warm, re-working of earlier, more expressive ideas. There is fire in the first bar of Dies irae, vivid literalism when the trumpets announce their movement, heaving repeated chords from the Interlude like echoes of a certain Adolescents' Dance of 1913, obvious anguish coupled with rhythmic nervousness at Lacrimosa and real Orthodox penitence in the chanting of Libera me. The choral contribution to all this is still taxing technically but much less so than previously. How much more satisfying then might technical preparation be when the end result is so much more direct in impact? This is indeed a multum in parvo, not through any crude pictorialism but through concise and subtle underlinings of the textual message, finely structured and intellectually controlled. If Canticum Sacrum, Threni, Sermon, Anthem, Flood and Introitus were cerebral then Requiem Canticles are, at least in substantial part, heartfelt.

¹ Quoted in SPD. p.479.

² Routh (op cit. p.129) quotes Craft's summary of the Postlude: 'The chord of Death, followed by silence, the tolling of bells, and again silence, all thrice repeated, then the three final chords of Death alone'.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

ZVEZDOLIKI

The earliest surviving choral score has much to tell us about Stravinsky the choral composer but from its creation (1911/12) until the present time it has received scant attention in the concert hall. Debussy, its dedicatee, was among the first to predict practical obstacles to its ready acceptance in the repertoire. 'I do not foresee performances of this "cantata for planets"'. As for our more modest Earth, a performance would be lost in the abyss'.¹

With Zvezdoliki promoters must accept a score lasting less than six minutes but demanding a vast orchestra (quadruple woodwind, eight horns, two harps, extra percussion) and a male chorus whose lush divisi writing makes rehearsal demands out of all proportion to the scale of the piece. The latter problem may have been greater at the time of composition² than today when professional choirs would have little fear of this relatively conventional work which simply demands precise intonation and chording. Loss of the original manuscript, added to these performing difficulties, delayed the first public performance of 'The Star-faced One' until April 1939 under Franz Andre in Brussels.

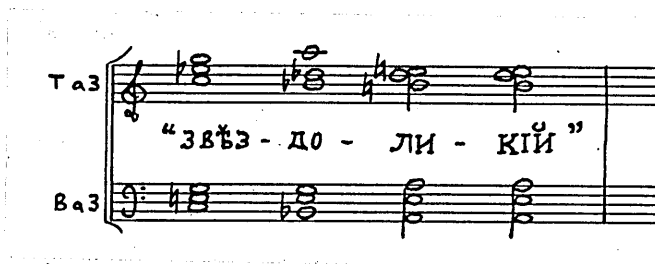
The chorus is fully employed during the 52 bars with only brief lead-in phrases for the large orchestra. The organ-like timbres of the wind instruments foreshadow the accompaniments of the Symphony of Psalms and the 1948 Mass, and the total avoidance of a full orchestral tutti reveals the same caution regarding dynamic balance as we see in the large serial scores such as Threni and the Requiem Canticles. The

1 Letter from Debussy to Stravinsky dated 18 Aug. 1913 (quoted in Vlad p.20).

2 Ravel in a letter concerning Zvezdoliki to Mme. Alfredo Casella, 2 April 1913: 'I assured Stravinsky that, thanks to Inghelbrecht (French conductor 1880-1965), our choruses in France have already been ruined and would not be able to sing what he has composed lately, which is most difficult (and very short, hardly 5 minutes) but excellent for an orchestral concert'. (SPD. p.63)

strings in Zvezdoliki remain muted throughout and WW.(p.205) notes that in the one passage for full woodwind plus brass the choral parts are marked 'Maestoso!' Stravinsky also tends to thin the orchestral texture when the chorus sings divisi and in contrast places unison voices against climaxes in the accompaniment.

Balance is less problematic than tuning in the voice parts. WW. (p.206) offers musical quotes for the work's first and last choral sounds which both demonstrate this problem. The score begins as below with an unaccompanied six-part setting of the title word with its famous

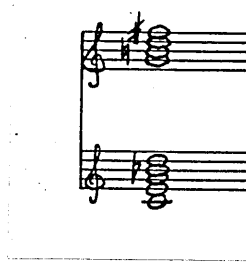


Ex. 42

oxymoron first chord. Melodic fragments from the outside tenor I/bass III parts are used later in the work. WW. suggests this is not intended for performance and is merely a motif to head the score. The present writer has heard this motif sung by professional singers and whilst finding the impact impressive has to agree that its position before the first orchestral sound is somewhat incongruous. Nevertheless, why, we may ask, did Stravinsky so fully compose his opening motto? May it not be comparable to the sung Dedication of the 1955 Canticum Sacrum or the Hebrew labellings of the sections in Threni? Individual conductors must decide. If included, the title word should be dynamically matched to the pianissimo instrumental sound which follows and introduces the next choral entry, also soft.

The final chord of the work is sung and played and is severely bitonal. The orchestra of strings only provide a C major chord with a flattened 7th and a 9th added whilst the voices superimpose a G major triad with added major 7th. The resulting chord thus combines the sounds

of G major and minor in the



Ex. 43

same way that the first chord (Ex. 42 above) presents C major and minor together. Vlad (p.25) summarises the choral technique employed and interestingly specifies the number of voices required (the minimum for correct balance and the maximum for tonal blend and accuracy of intonation):

'Two groups of tenors and basses, twelve in each group, further subdivided into two or three parts, following each syllable of the text in accordance with the strict tonic accent of the Russian language, set up vertical columns of chords which fall into polymodal, polytonal, and absolutely chromatic clusters'.

Apart from the brief unisons and passages like bars 18-20, which feature a lyrical tenor line set against three-part hummed chords, the dominant vocal sound is that of homophonic chanting with several instances of repeated pitches.¹ Such limited melodic profiles coupled with the close spacing of the parts vertically already look towards the Sacred Choruses and the Credo of the Mass. The harmonies may not smack of Russian Orthodoxy but the syllabic movement of male voices, frequently on monotones, certainly does.

Mystical symbolism is at the heart of the text of Zvezdoliki.

The composer's notorious response to Balmont's Russian poetry stated in MC. has already been quoted.² Vlad (p.22) offers a palatable translation and a less palatable digression on how this work epitomises Stravinsky's

1 qv. WW. p.205 Ex. 10 - the first choral phrase proper.

2 qv. Introduction above, p. 4.

view of art as 'an ontological reality'. David Matthews simply feels that the poem 'evokes the last Judgement in imagery reminiscent of the Book of Revelation. The Star-faced One is, of course, Christ'¹

Stravinsky recorded this piece himself in the early 1960's.....' but the tempi are much faster than his score indicates'.² The work deserves a specious treatment for already we can hear the same hieratic qualities already alluded to in the later sacred choral music. The instrumental sonorities are handled with the skill acquired in Firebird and Petrushka. Only the more individual choral writing presents problems. 'Its choral style.....already shows the vague distrust of the human voice which will reappear later on'.³ This truth must frustrate both singers and choir directors, because the vision and total concept of a work like Zvezdoliki are thoroughly original, artistically powerful and yet curiously inept for all but the faithful band of modern professional choirs with their abundance of absolute pitch. It is interesting that this musical idealism was demonstrated at the start of Stravinsky's career and then mollified until the last (serial) phase of his choral writings.

BABEL

This single movement cantata (duration c. 7 minutes) was completed in April 1944 as part of a cycle entitled Genesis. Other contributions to the composite work came from various eminent musicians including Milhaud and Schoenberg. Babel is scored for large orchestra plus male Narrator (spoken) and male chorus

1 Tempo No. 97, Summer 1971, p.10.

2 ibid. p.9.

3 Stephen Walsh, op cit. p.42.

(TTBB) which represents the Voice of God¹ and thereby heralds The Flood. All-male choruses had been employed by the composer in both Zvezdoliki and Oedipus Rex. Performances of the cantata outside America have been very few and the work's present significance rests in its being Stravinsky's first setting of English words. The text is from the Authorised Version of the Bible, Genesis Chapter 11, verses 1 - 9. WW. (p.418) informs us that the chorus occupies the second of four sections forming a diatonic passage marked Largo and supported by thick chordal instrumental sound.

The following critique of Sabel offers us a further illustration of the interplay between Stravinsky the artist and Stravinsky the believer:

'Stravinsky's conception of his work immediately revealed his views on faith, and on music as a function of faith. Instead of the chorus relating the epic action while the narrator speaks for the Eternal, it is the latter who relates the events of the Biblical episode while the chorus sings the divine words. This conception avoids any sort of ambiguity, any suspicion of imitation of the divine voice by the human voice. This word, spoken by the chorus, remains, so to speak, in quotes, and retains for that part its function as a quotation.

The divine word has no musical back-ground that would create a suggestive atmosphere. Everything remains on a purely musical plane, without any descriptive evocation.

The religious mystery, original source of the creation, made room for the technician intent upon his musical material, while imposing upon himself an added restriction: to avoid the profanation that would consist in visualizing what must remain a mystery and is accepted as dogma'. (Alexandre Tansman: Igor Stravinsky, the Man and His Music, trans. Therese & Charles Bleeckfield, New York, 1949, p.130)

1 Presaged in Schoenberg's Moses and Aaron (1932).

CANTATA

Completed in August, 1952 and first performed two months later by its dedicatee, the Los Angeles Symphony Society, this 30 minute work is an important setting of English fifteenth and sixteenth century lyrics. Three solo numbers are sandwiched between four appearances of the same fifteen-bar chorus for female voices - a strophic version of the nine verses of the anonymous 'Lyke-Wake Dirge'. Stravinsky's own programme note for the work (reproduced in full by WW. pp.469-71) claims the work to be secular despite using three semi-sacred poems and only one love lyric. In general atmosphere and in the canonic style of the chamber ensemble accompaniments to the solo items the Cantata feels no less religious than most medieval carols and has something of the archaism of the 1948 Mass.

In specific choral terms the Dirge setting leans heavily on earlier models. With its seven-bar instrumental prelude it emphasises the same Phrygian modality evident in pieces like The Wedding, the Ave Maria chorus and the Mass. Only the D major cadence wrenches us forward in musical time. Restraint marks the melodic writing, especially the stepwise incantation of the first sopranos restricted to a scale of five notes (A - E, save for a curious alteration of the final cadence in each of the last three verses). The text is presented syllabically, the only recurring melismas on 'every nighte' being of Stravinsky's favourite mordent-like shape. All voices move together at $J = 52$ with three-part writing achieved by alternately dividing sopranos and altos. The homophony looks back to former choral works and though in marked contrast to the counterpoint of the solo movements is in keeping with the sinister text. So perhaps is the near hypnotic effect of the exact verse-by-verse repetitions of this music at a restrained mf tranquillo marking - very different to Britten's frenzied tenor of the 1943 Serenade.

Once again perfect formal symmetry shows the stamp of the

composer and looks forward to vocal works like the Canticum Sacrum and The Flood. But in its technical treatment of the choral voices the Cantata says nothing new. We again see the composer's idiosyncratic word accentuation, the main distortion here being caused by the dragging syncopations and immovable rests so typical of Stravinsky:



'I selected.verses which attracted me not only for their great beauty and their compelling syllabification, but for their construction, which suggested musical construction' said Stravinsky in his own programme note and we are left questioning the words 'compelling syllabification' as much with this English text as with the many Latin pieces.

THE FLOOD

This 1962 setting of English texts from medieval mystery plays and the Bible has been variously described as a biblical allegory, a dance drama and a musical play. It was in fact a 24 minute CBS Television production involving mime, narration and singing, all with the support of a large orchestra. As such it seems to lie beyond the range of other works in this study at least with regard to medium. But there is an interesting choral component, albeit a very brief one, and this, together with other general features, offers a curious retrospect coming so late in the composer's career.

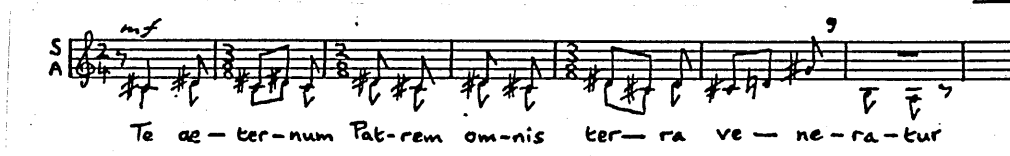
The Flood has the precise symmetry we have come to expect of the late period works and Francis Routh plots the formal scheme clearly in his book on Stravinsky.¹ From this we see one central orchestral movement depicting the Flood in which the last 27 bars set the first 27 in retrograde motion, the technique so dramatically presented at either end of the Canticum Sacrum of 1955. The instruments frame the whole play with a 7-bar Introduction and a 3-bar Coda whose neighbouring movements are the (only) two choruses. These mirror one another, though not exactly, in that both last 52 bars, set verses of the Te Deum, respectively end and begin with the words Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus and include substantially similar vocal and instrumental material. This material, though organised serially like the rest of the compact work, manages to hark back almost to the first phase of Stravinsky's choral writing. The text for the three-voice SAT chorus is once again in Latin, the texture homophonic with much unison (eg. SAT bars 23-44 and 560-579) and two-part writing, syllabic word setting and chant-like melodic lines due to the composer's penchant for oscillating repetitions of notes even within a

1 op cit. p.90

twelve-note row. Anthony Payne comments ¹ that the choral setting of the Te Deum 'reverts to a ritual chanting which has much in common with a work written as long ago as The Wedding. At this point it might be as well to recall the origins of The Flood in the York and Chester miracle plays, for presumably this Te Deum would in the original have formed a processional opening'.

The soprano line is the least mobile, most chant-like of the three choral parts, frequently pivoting around a centre (especially F sharp or C sharp). Ancient chant was recalled by

Ex. 45



early works such as the Three Sacred Choruses and the label Byzantine is used by Vlad (p.236) and by the composer himself to describe the Te Deum setting. 'At the beginning of the Te Deum - a piece that sounds 'Byzantine' (to me) and that, to some extent, but purely by coincidence, suggests a well-known five-note Byzantine chant - I begin my serial construction'. ² Donald Mitchell alludes to the same chorus as an illustration of recurring 'Russianness' in Stravinsky's melodic style ³ and we can find many bars in earlier works such as The Wedding (figs. 7, 12, 27ff.) and the 1926 Pater Noster which serve as models for this late offering of what Stravinsky immodestly called 'not Gregorian but Igorian chant'. ⁴

Other features of these two choruses make them typical of the

1 'Stravinsky's The Flood', Tempo No.70, Autumn 1964, p.4.

2 ED. pp.124-5.

3 op cit. p.108 (footnote).

4 OD. p.72.

other serial works. There is no instrumental doubling, support coming mainly from a single bass line (such as the bassoon accompanying Ex. 45 above). More helpful are pitch cues - the horns' D flat providing the initial tenor C sharp entry and the sustained orchestral 5th cueing the bar 527 entry. The tenors experience the most angularity, including compound intervals and the usual tritones and 7ths associated with serial melodic lines. The ranges of all three voice parts closely match those of the Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer completed one year earlier.

S	min.10th	C sharp	-	E
A	perf.11th	A	-	D
T	maj.10th	F	-	A

In a piece which, despite its particular commission, makes fragmented impact due to the overcrowded scenario wedded to over-concise serial music (or barren 'note row spinning and padding'¹) the choral writing has definite character and atmosphere. The unisons are very powerful, the oscillating melodic shapes evoke ritual, the continuous driving rhythms create energy and the varied dynamics, especially the gradual perdendosi effect from bar 563 to the end, shape the over-all dramatic scheme of the text. All this is eminently practicable for choralists who take care over intonation. Therefore it is perhaps significant that this strength of character comes from so much reiteration of 'Russian period' formulae.

INTROITUS (T.S.Eliot in memoriam)

Though prompted by the
death of the Anglo-American

1 John Cheshire, 'Stravinsky and Britten', BBC Radio 3 talk, 6 Mar.1977.

poet T.S. Eliot on 4 January 1965 this brief (4 minute) presentation of the opening paragraph of the Requiem Mass may be seen as a preparatory essay to the eventual Requiem Canticles of 1966. Indeed the latter piece was begun in March 1965 one month after the completion of Introitus and links between the two works have already been noted.¹ These include melodic shapes, particularly 4th and 5th intervals, common to rows used in the two pieces. Introitus gives the chorus all four versions of the basic row presented as single unison phrases with a final combining of retrograde and retrograde inversion. We learn in SPD. (p.474) that the composer first set the text without harmony and without rhythm (crotchets only) to a twelve-note series and its permutations, each phrase of the text corresponding to one of these. Requiem aeternam.luceat ei (sic.) is repeated for the final two-part chorus. In this Stravinsky particularly indulges in note repetition combined, in Ex. 46, with typical oscillating pitches.

The image shows a musical score for two voices, Tenor (T) and Bass (B), labeled 'CORSO' on the left. The Tenor staff is in G-clef and the Bass staff is in F-clef. The music consists of a series of notes, mostly quarter notes, with some rests. The lyrics 'et lux per-pe-tu-a' are written below the notes. The score is labeled 'Ex. 46' on the right. There is a circled number '47' at the bottom left of the Bass staff.

The chorus is limited to tenor and bass voices accompanied by eight instrumentalists whose sounds match the tessitura of the voices.² They also produce low, bell-like sonorities very much in Stravinsky's ritualistic mould and a similar scoring (Plus violins) accompanies the memorial Prayer ending Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer four years

1 qv. pp.175,187above.

2 Harp, piano (mainly bass clef), viola, db. bass, 2 tam-tams, 2 muffled timpani (which achieve all the serial pitches usually in the sextuplet rhythm chanted by the chorus to Requiem aeternam at bar 16).

earlier. Its chamber-music scale makes Introitus a low register equivalent of the high-voice Dirge choruses in the 1952 Cantata. WW. (p.538) looks back to the Voice of God duets in The Flood for a similar textural lay-out. He notes rhythmic drumming and the sounds of harp and piano in both works. But in purely choral terms the obvious model for both Introitus and the Requiem Canticles is Threni. Serial melodic profiles together with chant-like repetitions are heralded by the Lamentations which also pioneered choral parlando. Two passages of rhythmic, pitchless chanting are inserted in the present piece (bars 16-17 and 40-41, both for combined tenors and basses). Each parlando is marked sotto voce and its rhythms carefully notated, though not always agreeing with verbal stresses.

Performances of Introitus (in which the chorus is heard in 37 out of the total of 53 bars) need employ only a few voices due to the low dynamic levels and the small numbers of instruments sounding against the singers. The piano and harp never accompany the sung phrases, only the choral speech. For tonal blend three of each voice type is a desirable minimum and security of pitching a desirable qualification as instrumental cues are diffuse or non-existent. Phrases must be long-breathed or staggered by individual voices.

The vocal ranges employed closely follow those of

Threni:

T	maj. 10th	D	-	F sharp
B	perf. 11th	G sharp	-	C sharp

There is no divisi writing for either voice. The underlay of the Latin text is consistently syllabic and Stravinsky uses ♩ and ♪ note-values only throughout. Frequent metre changes (between 2/4, 3/4, 4/4) present no difficulty at ♩ = 56 tempo which, coupled with restrained dynamics, reinforces the solemn mood of this 'Panikheda chorus in memory of the unforgettable Eliot'.¹

¹ Stravinsky in a letter to his publisher dated 26 Feb. 1965.

TWO SECULAR LANDMARKS

'Les Noces is one of the masterpieces of this (Russian) period and possibly the only really important work that Stravinsky has given us'. When constant Lambert wrote this in 1933¹ Stravinsky had only completed Zvezdoliki, the Symphony of Psalms and two of the Sacred Choruses to specifically religious or mystical texts. But there existed two secular choral pieces which have since proved to be the most substantial in all of the composer's vocal repertoire, not only in terms of duration but in their comprehensive scoring for massed voices. In The Wedding (1914-17) and Oedipus Rex (1926-27) we can see important prototypes for many of the features of the later choral works, few of which attempt to incorporate more than a selection of the range of effects presented in these notable models. Even when viewed solely on vocal grounds the impact of these two pieces is considerable and this can be explained in technical terms as well as in the more obvious dramatic nature of each piece.

For purposes of comparison with the sacred compositions already described The Wedding ('Russian choreographic scenes with song and music') is indeed archetypal. Much of the music smacks literally of the Orthodox church and the composer himself declared that 'the first staging of The Wedding was in general compatible with my conception of the ritualistic and non-personal.....'² In Musical America, 10 January 1925, Stravinsky explained that

'Les Nocesis written for a polyphonic, contrapuntal chorus. I go back to Bach and to Palestrina and to old Russian church music. You in the western world do not know this, but in Russia any chorus can sing this music, because for years they sang it in the churches. There were

1 Music Hol, Faber (3rd edition, 1966), p.91.

2 Quoted in WW. p.259.

no instruments..... I did not want anything so human as violins. The voices give the music of the wind instruments, and there is an intransigent quality about it that you cannot get from the strings. Four pianos give the percussion effect. You would be surprised at what can be done with such a combination'.

The solid homophony supporting a melodic line, chant-like in its limited range, which we associate with Russian liturgical music, is much in evidence particularly in the first of the two Acts of The Wedding. At fig.50 in the second scene the following duet is announced unaccompanied by the bass soloist and Un basso profundo del coro:

Ex. 47

Vlad (p.71) gives Victor Belaieff's opinion that this theme is derived from a collection of Russian Christmas chants. Craft is more precise.¹ He traces the melody's origin to the Fifth Tone of the Sticheron (Psalm tropes), part of the ancient Russian Quamennyi ² chants and one sung after the Matin psalm 'Lord, I cried unto Thee'. Craft illustrates the derivations by juxtaposing fragments of the chant with phrases from The Wedding (figs.50-51), where Stravinsky has clearly reshaped the material to his own use:³

Ex. 48

¹ SPD, pp.619 (footnote No.240) and 149 (musical examples).

² *ibid.* p.149 (and probably a typographical error for Znamenny).

³ Stravinsky, perhaps for this reason, did not personally admit to borrowing the chant. What was acknowledged was the theme introduced by solo soprano at fig.110 + 2, a Russian factory song passed on to Stravinsky by his friend Stepan Mitusov in 1906 or 1907 (WW, p.255).

Static or gently undulating melodies, such as that of the bride's female followers at fig. 24, plus much stepwise vocal movement becomes a marked feature of the Three Sacred Choruses and the 1948 Mass. What remains individual to the ballet score is the heightened rhythmic vigour given to the voice parts. Syncopations, metre changes and tempi fixed at either $\text{♩} = 120$ or $\text{♩} = 80$ ($\text{♩} = 112$ briefly at fig. 40) bring an invigorating drive even to monotone lines. Surely Orff's Carmina Burana of twenty years later owed a debt in this respect to the earlier work (Ex. 49 below) as well as to its falsetto drunkards (eg. fig. 109 'ou est le cygne' compared with Orff's roasted swan!). Such peasant energy pervades earlier pieces by Stravinsky

Ex. 49

Strav. $\text{♩} = 120$

T. div.

B. div.

27

Orff $\text{♩} = 144$

S.

A.

T.

B.

121 + 7

Detailed description: The image contains two musical excerpts. The top excerpt is from Stravinsky, featuring three vocal parts (T. div., B. div., and a middle part) in 4/4 time with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. The lyrics are 'Jaig-ne ai-ma-ble mè-re, daigne en-trer dans la chan-mièr(e), daigne nous ai-der'. The bottom excerpt is from Orff, featuring four vocal parts (S., A., T., B.) in 4/4 time with a tempo of 144 beats per minute. The lyrics are 'Tem-pus est io-cun-dum, tem-pus est io-cun-dum o, o, o, o, o vir-gi-n-es, o vir-gi-n-es'. Both excerpts show complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

and one can agree with Routh's view that the 'vocal style (of The Wedding) continues that of Renard or Pribaoutki; the metre follows that

of the text while the melodic material makes plentiful use of repeated notes within a limited compass'.¹ The Wedding therefore happily welds sacred and secular musical characteristics inherited from Russia's past - a fusion seldom achieved (or even sought?) in the purely religious works involving chorus. Robert Siohan summarises the folk-like melodies of this unique piece as follows:

'In their robust vigour they seem to recall an ancient Russia, still at the dawn of Christianity, perhaps even before the age of Jenghiz Khan: some very primitive ones are built up on no more than three or four notes, others are formed out of archaic scales, closely related to the plainsong of Western Europe, which reached Russia from Greece through Byzantium'.²

However, it is Siohan who draws attention to another feature of The Wedding which wholly vindicates its composer's philosophy concerning the sung word, and incidentally points up the major difference between it and the other secular giant Oedipus Rex. Referring to the ballet Siohan wrote

'it may be objected that it has a text and is accordingly related to a literary subject. But there is every indication that the text is there merely to support the voices, and for the greater part of the time it has no logical meaning at all. Moreover, the way the vocal parts are interwoven makes it clear that the composer was not in the least concerned to make this text intelligible to his audience'.³

For this reason Siohan denies the possibility of labelling The Wedding a cantata or oratorio - where words must have dramatic and therefore structural significance. The original version of this work features a Russian text gleaned by the composer himself principally from Kirelevsky's ten volume collection of Russian Popular Poems (1868-74). The Chester score also provides the French translation by Ramuz and WW.(p.250) lists an English version by D. Millar Craig. We have already quoted Stravinsky's reservations about his mother tongue (Chapter 3, p. 28 above)

1 op cit. p.80.

2 Stravinsky (trans.Walter White), John Calder,1965, p.62.

3 ibid. pp.59 - 60.

though these comments must help us to understand the importance given to rhythm in The Wedding. WW. (p.257) makes an interesting and pertinent suggestion about the dramatic value of rhythm in the choral writing here:

'So long as the syllables of the Russian text are set more or less evenly in accordance with Stravinsky's preferred method, irregular musical metres prevail; but as soon as the comic element comes to the fore in the 'Wedding Feast', the need for syncopation arises, and this presupposes the existence of regular metres. The beat is constant; and the whole work is carefully geared to two metronome rates of 80 or 120 to the minute'.

Such emphasis on metre makes the performance of the music in Russian highly desirable. There is no need of direct narrative; the mime of the dancers tells all. And it is in the solid choral writing of the ballet, perhaps even more than in the later opera-oratorio, that words function 'like a block of marble or stone in a work of sculpture or architecture'. Only the soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass soloists need to project the text like folk-singers (they often have reduced accompaniments or no accompaniments at all as in Ex. 47 above and are decorated with grace notes and portamenti in the manner of folk-song performance). But, even given the homophonic unison rhythms and syllabic underlay of the bulk of the choral writing, the generally high dynamic levels and energetic tempi minimise textual clarity from the massed voices. This sets a significant precedent for so much later choral work irrespective of the chosen languages.

More remarkable than purely textual matters is the variety of choral sounds paraded in The Wedding. All of the following details of scoring and vocal effects may be found:

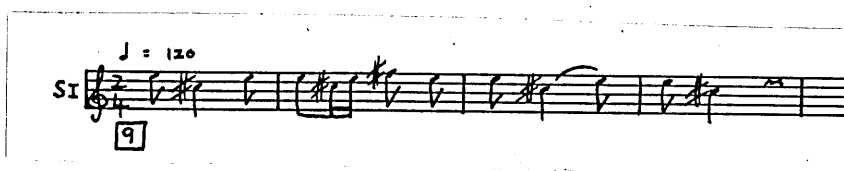
limited range/monotone chanting	figs.2, 27ff.
parallel chording (quasi organum)	" 59(TB), 97
unisons	" 44, 87
octaves	" 65(SA)
shared melodies	" 94(ST/AB)
imitation	" 64(BAS), 74(AT), 120+2(B/B)
antiphony	" 45ff. 75ff.

miscellaneous groupings:

SSAA	figs. 9
SSATTB	" 17
TTBB) mainly through	" 27
AATTBB) doublings	" 44
soloist-from-chorus	" 50 (B)
extremes of range	" 47 (B) 130+5(S)
choral speech	" 125-2
choral shout	" 55
onomatopoeia (tongue click?)	" 100
<u>glissendi</u>	" 126+3 (TB)
<u>heterophony</u>	" 87ff.(ST/AB)101(SA)
<u>ostinato</u>	" 65 (SA)
<u>metre changes</u>	" 27ff.(TTBB)
<u>syncopation</u>	" 27ff. 92
<u>cross rhythms</u>	" 71 (AB) 74 (TB)
<u>dynamic contrasts</u>	" 2 (SA) 44ff.

The above references to the score indicate for the most part only a selection of the possible illustrations. For this is a very substantial vocal work (35 minutes in duration) in which only the final 21 bars are for instruments alone. The whole represents a dedication to the choral medium unusual for Stravinsky and also for twentieth century dramatic works in general and its repercussions in its composer's later output are numerous and varied.

The Wedding's strong chordal textures and syllabic treatment of the text (if not the impetuous tempi) pass on into the Three Sacred Choruses, much of the Symphony of Psalms, the Credo movement of the Mass and even the first and last choruses of the Canticum Sacrum. The earlier items here also reflect the limited melodic ranges of the ballet music. The 1926 Pater Noster and much of the 1930 Symphony of Psalms emphasise melodic inflections dominated by (minor) 3rd intervals (qv.WW. pp.360-61) in the same way that fig.9 in The Wedding provides important thematic material right up to the final epithalamium at fig.133. The



Ex. 50

Ave Maria (1934), Mass (1948) and Cantata (1952) all share the Phrygian modality of the 1917 music whilst the forward-looking choral speech has to wait until Threni (1958) and A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer (1960-61) for future airings. Stravinsky personally acknowledged (qv.p. 54 above) the structural influence of The Wedding's final sung bars in the repetition of Laudate Dominum to round off the final movement of the 1930 symphony. This movement also recognises the importance of ostinato figures such as underpin much of The Wedding.¹

Further mention may be made of details such as the material from Russian church chant and the instrumental bell-figures which permeate so many later compositions. Perhaps these two ritualistic ingredients of the ballet provide important stylistic patterns for future religious music. But it seems that The Wedding's very substantial influence is chiefly in details rather than in broader characteristics. No single choral piece after this shows massed voices so totally integrated into the composer's vision of the work and in terms of choral groupings rhythmic interest and dramatic atmosphere the 'choreographic scenes' have no equal among Stravinsky's sacred compositions.

Though the composer underplays text intelligibility in the work no one can deny the powerful theatricalism of Oedipus Rex even given the static staging-with-masks originally envisaged. Here is a brutal human drama - a classical tragedy sung in a classical tongue but narrated (in speech) in the vernacular. Stravinsky's response to the tale is indeed Romantic, from the scale of the orchestration² to the Verdian solo

¹ The twisting repeats of the melodic shapes in the Hosanna of the Mass have already been cited (qv.p. 94) as reminiscent of the earlier work.

² 3.3.3.3 - 4.4.3.1 - timp., percussion, harp, piano, strings.

roles such as the music of Queen Jocasta.

The opera-oratorio (much more opera, given its violent human plot and quasi-baroque stylized staging and costuming) gives the choral voices clearly identifiable roles and a dramatic status equal to that of the principal soloists. The chorus is both crowd (citizens of plague-threatened Thebes) and spirit-voices (the memory or conscience of Oedipus - as in their repetition of the prophetic 'trivium' from fig.114ff. - or Everyman - as in the final commiserating farewell to the King). In function, as well as in their immobile staging, the choral singers recall The Wedding and point towards the asylum scene in The Rake's Progress. In musical content the choral sound matches the drama including, among many examples, the anxious and forceful challenging of the blind seer Tiresias (fig.68 ff.), the nightmare 'fate' rhythm of the oft-repeated 'trivium' or the 'sickening, lurching six-eight rhythm' ¹ in which the chorus reiterates the news of Jocasta's suicide (fig.173ff.). There is a degree of literalism here not altogether surprising at this point in the composer's career with so many vivid ballet scores recently completed and with such awesome imagery inherent in the classical scenario chosen. All of which underlines what fundamentally separates Oedipus Rex from the sacred choral repertoire where there is seldom an overtly dramatic response to texts. However, the work's theatrical impact was felt to have been diminished in its first performance in Paris, 30 May 1927, when it was given a concert-style performance (as an 'oratorio') sharing the programme with the splendours of the Firebird ballet. Perhaps full appreciation of Oedipus requires of its audience the same intellectual application, unaided visually, as is needed

1 Wilfrid Mellers, 'Stravinsky's Oedipus as 20th Century Hero', MQ. July 1962, p.310. Chromaticism, lush for Stravinsky, creates a strong hint of delirium in this section.

in typical sacred music performances. Indeed, the 1927 piece affords some important direct and indirect links with many of the religious compositions already discussed.

The first demand on the listener is linguistic and Oedipus Rex is of paramount importance in this study for being its composer's first use of Latin. Among Stravinsky's own reasons for his choice of language, quoted fully in Chapter 3, p. 28 ff. above, two are significant for what they tell us of the philosophy behind so many of the Latin religious works. 'The word is pure material' and 'a language of convention, almost of ritual' set a stamp of hieratic remoteness on the composer's approach to pieces in this medium. He even sees Oedipus as 'a great advance' on The Wedding in its capacity to achieve musical detachment through its non-emotional, neutral/universal language. The syllable becomes important (qv. CH.p.128) as the unit of sound, irrespective of grammatical connotations and metrical accentuation, as Oedipus rather plentifully illustrates.

'I will admit, however, that my habits of musical accentuation have misled meaning in at least one instance. The line Ego senem cecidi in Oedipus Rex accented on the ce, as I have it, means 'I fell the old man', whereas it should be accented Ego senem cecidi and mean 'I killed the old man'. This can be corrected in performance, but remains awkward'. 1

'.....Even the shift from 'OEdipus' (which should be pronounced OYdipus by the singers and EEdipus by the speaker) to 'OeDipus' is unthinkable from the point of view of speech, which, of course, is not my point of view'. 2

We have noted this freedom of syllable accentuation in almost all the composer's choral output, whatever the language chosen. In these earlier secular works it brings great rhythmic vitality and variety apt for their inherent dramatic qualities, as well as providing an atmosphere of

1 MC. p.150 footnote. The cecidi cross-accentuation was pointed out to Stravinsky by the conductor Bernardino Molinari in a letter of April 1937. Stravinsky did not, however, alter the setting in the 1947 revision.

2 DD. p.31. In a footnote Stravinsky adds some further points concerning pronunciation: 'The 'pus' must rhyme with moose, 'Tiresias' must be pronounced 'Tyreesias', and Jocasta in three syllables - 'Iokaste'.

primitivism. The origin of this outlook is in Stravinsky's national background, referred to in ED. (qv. extract in Chapter 1, p. 6 above), and reflected in Russian text works such as The Wedding and the Four Russian Peasant Songs (SSAA voices) both dating from 1914-17. Stephen Walsh¹ offers the following comment and quotations from two of these secular pieces which, even in translation, illustrate the effect of shifting stresses:

'Apart from its psychological effect (which might be either whimsical, as here Ex.51a, 2 or symbolic, as in Oedipus Rex, Ex.51b), this manner of word-setting solved the problem of irregular musical rhythms applied to verse of regular metre, and at the same time produced ready-made a vocal idiom which, although expressively restricted, 3 would provide enough rhythmic colour and verbal humour to sustain a work on a much larger scale'.

Ex.51

a)

b)

The verbal underlay in the classical work remains predominantly syllabic and this feature is turned to powerful dramatic advantage when the chorus reacts to the doom-laden news of the death of Oedipus's presumed father Polybus and the revelation of the king's mere foster relationship to the latter.

Ex.52

p slacc.

¹ op cit. p.45.

² From Four Russian Peasant Songs.

³ 'The anti-expressive syllabic recitation, the ostinato patterns.....have affinities with Stravinsky's primitive phase'. Metters, op cit. p.302.

Further truths from the Messenger and Shepherd bring forth a similar specimen of anguished syllable separation a little later:

Ex. 53

LE BERGER e TENORI

a - Jo - ca - sta de - re - lic - tum in mo - nte rep - par - tus est

p sub.

LE MESSAGER e BASSI

166 167

This sets a precedent for the controversial final word of the Symphony of Psalms (qv. footnote to p. 58), choruses 2b and 15c in Persephone and the final Alleluia of A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer.

Such a liberal approach to word handling may console performers and conductors who also search their souls (or antique primers) for a resolution of the time-honoured problem of Latin pronunciation. The following correspondence prompted by a record review demonstrates what a grey area this is and highlights just some of the questions singers must face in all Latin text pieces:

MT. Mar. 1977, p.210 (A letter following Paul Griffiths' review in MT. Dec. 1976, p.1006, of Bernstein's Oedipus recording CBS 76380)

'Paul Griffiths unfairly criticizes the choir in a new CBS recording of Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex for its 'weedy' pronunciation of the Latin text, eg. 'inwidia' for 'invidia'. I Mr. Griffiths is perhaps not aware that this is the correct ciceronian pronunciation of the sound represented in modern orthography by v. Since Stravinsky himself (DD. pp.21ff.) insisted on a Ciceronian pronunciation in this work, even going so far as to write k instead of c before e, i, ae and oe (eg. 'skelus ulkiski') this recording should be praised for its fidelity to his intentions rather than the opposite.

Mr. Griffiths might have argued (1) that Stravinsky did not know how Ciceronian Latin was pronounced; (2) that the libretto as translated by Jean Danielou is not in fact Ciceronian Latin; or (3) that Stravinsky has sanctioned recordings of Oedipus Rex with other pronunciations. Even so, it is to my mind only natural, even laudable, that an academic choir such as the Harvard Glee Club should choose the historically correct pronunciation rather than the usual illogical mixture of local, classical and

1 A word not sung by the choir, only by Oedipus (fig.83). D.B.

church pronunciations'.

Helsinki

Erik Wahlström

MT. May 1977, p.393 (Paul Griffiths' reply to the above)

' I prefer to base my judgement on the fact that, as Mr. Wahlström concedes, Stravinsky himself preferred the 'v' sound in performance, on his failure to specify the 'w' sound in the score (his orthography 'skelus ulkiski', quoted by Mr. Wahlström, suggests that he might have written 'inwidia' if he had wanted it that way) and, I readily confess, on personal taste'.

Given current variations in scholarly opinion on this matter we can only urge choir-trainers to reflect experience and (good) personal taste in pronunciations provided consistency within the choral ensemble and throughout the course of a whole work is achieved. Stravinsky's precision in orthography referred to by both the above correspondents is peculiar to Oedipus Rex and though confined to the conversion of the Ciceronian 'c' to 'k' has obvious implications for all subsequent works with Latin texts. At least the purity of Latin vowels and the clarity of the consonants ('w/v' excepted!)¹ allow conductors to colour vocal tone to suit the mood of the music. Linguistically it is a perfect vehicle for Stravinsky's expression at its most objective.

Stravinsky's quoted justifications for using Latin include references to church usage and more specifically (qv. Chapter 3, p. 24) to the musical character and symbolism of the obviously quasi-sacred Gloria chorus at fig.90ff. in the present work. It is very significant that the composer alludes to the tri-partite appearances of this hymnic music and its associations with the Holy Trinity for quoted below is part of the Gloria ending a Cherubic Hymn (to the Trinity) by Rakhmaninov. This un-accompanied chorus appears in an English edition of 1915,² the text being part of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom which Rakhmaninov had

1 Wahlström is correct in that the modern 'v' does not occur in original Ciceronian Latin.

2 Bayley & Ferguson, London. Edited with English words by A.M.Henderson.

set complete in 1910. It shares with the chorus greeting Queen Jocasta's entrance the same chordal texture, identical division of the male voices (Rakhmaninov tops his chorus with divisi SA parts) and, later, scalewise bass lines. For

Ex. 54

f al fine Stravinsky

[90]

Rakhmaninov

Stravinsky Russian church music meant homophony, unison rhythms and harmonic simplicity:

'This is why the act can conclude with a Gloria, celebrating Jocasta's arrival in Stravinsky's "white note" diatonicism. The personal life of Oedipus's rondo-aria is banished; but the ceremonial music that succeeds is related more to Stravinsky's music for the Russian Orthodox Church and even to his primitive works than to the harmonic ceremonial of a heroic composer such as Handel. Indeed, the chorus strikingly anticipates the Symphony of Psalms'.¹

Another chorus from the opera-oratorio, fig.144ff., looks back to the nervous rhythms of The Wedding and forward to the contortions of the Hosanna in the Mass (the word Oedipus again shifting in accent here like the greeting word in the 1948 composition). Fig.162 has the chorus echoing the Shepherd and the Messenger on chant-like monotones and pivotal, reiterated notes point up the despair expressed in the work's closing bars. Further suggestions of sacred incantatory music may be found in the solo vocal lines, such as the eponymous hero's initial entry.

'The melos in the part of Oedipus might have been inspired by ecclesiastical chant and by such devices as the pneuma 2, whose power of feeling had been remarked in the fourth century by Jerome and Augustine. The

¹ Wilfrid Mellers, op cit.p.306. WW. (p.336) declares '.....the central Gloria is definitely music that has been influenced by Russian Church ritual'.

² A type of florid passage sung to a single vowel in plainsong.

style of the chorus part frequently evokes the Church.....' 1

And so once again we are reminded of the fact that Oedipus Rex bridges the gap between the secularism of the Russian period works and the whole corpus of hieratic, Christian pieces that dominate the remainder of Stravinsky's choral repertoire.

Technically the choral writing here is nearly as varied as that in The Wedding. The chorus ranges from unison male voices (eg. fig. 15) to TTBB (as in Ex. 52 above), a combination established in Zvezdoliki (1912) and employed again in Babel (1944) and the Introlitus (1965). Figs.136-138 demonstrate a cappella writing, all homophonic, while imitative polyphony is plentifully supplied at figs. 63, 114 and 192. The generally syllabic word-setting breaks at fig.13 to allow the basses only to indulge in melisma. Fig.25ff., where the word 'Vale' should be corrected to 'Ave', offers reiterated four-part chords with baritones crossing the second tenors (typical of Stravinsky's careful balancing of chords in works like the Mass) and a brief phrase in octaves. No extremes of tenor or bass registers are required in Oedipus which in this respect closely matches the Three Sacred Choruses. The king's un-accompanied clamando speech before fig.88 recalls similar effects in The Wedding but is not taken up by the massed voices. 'Solve, Oedipus' (fig.60ff.) is the nearest thing to the choral shouts of the 1917 ballet.

The fully developed plot of Oedipus compared with the dramatically static scenes of The Wedding automatically leads Stravinsky to possibly his most colourful and concentrated score. Not only is this the first use of the conventional full symphony orchestra since 1914 but in the power and strategic involvement of the chorus we can look back to 'a strong Verdi influence'.² The composer is quoted in Il Resto di

1 Robert Craft in SPD. p.212.

2 Francis Routh, op cit. p.84.

Carlino, Bologna, May 1935, as having said 'I prefer Verdi to all other music of the nineteenth century'¹ and the men's reactions to Jocasta's suicide are the clearest evidence of this vivid Romantic ancestry. However, we must again turn to the arbitrary treatment of word accents, especially in the newly chosen classical language, and the at times restrained musical elements of liturgical models for pointers to the future choral works.

It is noteworthy that the two most exciting choral scores by Stravinsky, in which the music closely underlines the flavour of the libretti, are also those in which a strong visual and theatrical element is present to doubly reinforce the spirit of the texts. This fact throws into even starker relief the almost monochrome presentations of so many of the composer's chosen sacred themes. But such is his rigorous musical aesthetic that as far back as 1913 he was declaring that '..... I dislike opera. Music can be married to gesture or to words but not to both without bigamy'.² Such prejudice, though expressed very early in his career, is borne out particularly by the dramatic restraint of Stravinsky's word-settings and makes staged works such as Reynard, The Wedding, Perephone, The Rake's Progress and The Flood exceptions rather than rules. Post-Oedipus Rex expressive word-painting seemed anathema to the composer and in different ways the two secular 'Landmarks' discussed above offer clear indications of this attitude. The Wedding ostensibly sets out to create a primitive, carnival chatter³ with no literal narrative implications (set and gestures guide the audience through the changing scenes) whilst the opera-oratorio relies more on plot (witness the spoken

1 Quoted in SPD. p.204.

2 A Daily Mail interview of 13 Feb. 1913 quoted in SPD. p.95.

3 Note Constant Lambert's observation (op cit.p.168):

'The occasional appearance of counterpoint in the choral parts, again, is due not to any actual contrapuntal feeling but to an antiphonal use of melodic phrases reminiscent of primitive African singing'.

narrations in the vernacular) but places the musical setting at ritualistic arm's length by the use of classical Latin.

What these early choral pieces do not predict is the remarkably reserved scoring for choirs and the austerity of expression in so much of the future repertoire of Stravinsky's. Rhythmic variety, dynamic contrasts and permuted groupings of the voice parts, including homophony, polyphony and antiphony, are all hallmarks of the ballet and the opera-oratorio. Both these works have substantial quantities of choral music and in each Stravinsky is able to cover the gamut of vocal effects common to the time (with the exception of Schoenberg's sprechgesang notated in the Gurrelieder, 1900-11, and Pierrot Lunaire, 1912). There are few later choral works extensive enough to admit a wide range of vocal timbres without laying themselves open to criticisms of inconsistency. Much shorter portions of text, well separated by solo vocal writing or orchestral interludes, prompt the miniaturist choral writing of the post-1950 years and concision has also been noted in those important religious compositions without independent solos, the Symphony of Psalms, the unaccompanied Sacred Choruses and the Mass. Yet in all of these mature pieces scope could still have been found for the same variety of rhythm, dynamics and choral textures which colours music of this genre in all historical periods and which so splendidly attires these two secular masterpieces of Stravinsky's.

SUMMARY

The Context

In 1913 Sergei Rakhmaninov composed a 'choral symphony' while staying in a Rome apartment once occupied by Tchaikovsky's brother Modest. This tenuous historical association extends more vividly to the musical character of the work for The Bells, Op.35, is a dramatic and often lyrical setting of verses by Edgar Allan Poe with lush orchestration, pictorial realism (especially in the fully choral scherzo) and folk-song idioms for the soprano and tenor soloists which place it firmly and nobly in the line of nineteenth century nationalist traditions. The subject of the American's verses would have been close to any devout Imperialist Russian heart and none more so than Stravinsky's, as we have seen from the many campanological allusions in his early repertoire, vocal and instrumental. But the residual Romanticism of the older man's piece would have offered little to inspire the artist working that year on a ritual piece of a much more violent order. He had courted the recent musical past in just one choral work, Zvezdoliki of 1911/12, a chromatic, sometimes polytonal but mainly Impressionist gesture. It was to a less familiar, more austere tradition that the bulk of Stravinsky's sacred music turned throughout the pre-serial years, a tradition which Rakhmaninov also revered and brought to an opulent climax with his great unaccompanied Vespers Mass of 1915. This heritage of Russian Orthodoxy centres on entirely vocal sounds of often awesome simplicity with narrow-range melodies eschewing the rhythmic vagaries of native folk-song and adopting dynamic schemes akin to the terraced contrasts of classical organ registrations. Its chief concessions to instrumental-style scoring lie in the rich divisi sonority of the choral textures, its absorption of baroque Venetian antiphony between massed and occasionally solo voice groups and

its use of low tessitura parts for the basses. Here were techniques for choral scoring which Stravinsky chose in the main to neglect and, set alongside the vocal writings of contemporary composers in general, his language in this medium, though authoritative, remains cautious, even wilfully limited in its abhorrence of any overtly expressive effects.

In Stravinsky's many 'conversations' there are surprisingly few references to the choral music of other writers, especially contemporary composers. His student-day listening was dominated by nineteenth century opera ¹ and its attendant orchestral sounds and he absorbed the techniques of this essentially instrumental repertoire from Rimsky-Korsakov.

'I remember hardly any concerts by solo singers in St. Petersburg, probably for the reason that vocal recitals are torture for me. I did go to hear Adelina Patti, but only out of curiosity, for at that time this tiny woman with the bright orange wig sounded like a bicycle pump'. ²

On his first visit to Debussy (after the Firebird premiere) the two composers talked 'about Mussorgsky's songs and agreed that they contained the best music of the whole Russian school'. ³ As late as Oedipus Rex we may discern a not insignificant recognition of Romantic qualities in the avowedly Verdian melodic writing for both soloists and chorus (qv. Chapter 7 above). But it is the eighteenth century which is evoked in the years following the First World War: the mock-Lutheran chorales of The Soldier's Tale, the Pergolesi of Pulcinella, the counterpoint of pieces like the Octet and the piano concerto with winds. 'Rococo-operatic sweets-of-sin', namely Mozart Masses, encouraged (albeit as a counter-blast) the non-commissioned Mass of the 1940's whilst The Rake's

1 Wagner Lohengrin
 Glinka Ruslan and Ludmilla, A Life for the Tsar
 Borodin Prince Igor
 Rimsky-Korsakov Sadko, plus Tchaikovsky's ballet Sleeping Beauty, all heard at St. Petersburg's Maryinsky Theatre according to Routh (op cit.p.3).

2 ED. p.55.

3 Quoted by Jeremy Noble in 'Debussy and Stravinsky', MT. Jan.1967, p.22.

Progress leans heavily on Mozart's example. Yet even the 1948 Mass and certainly the Sacred Choruses and the Symphony of Psalms borrow little stylistically from the baroque or from Classical Vienna. It is to earlier sounds that Stravinsky's ear has frequently turned, as he explained in his later years. Asked by Craft¹ what music delighted him most he listed '..... Bach cantatas too numerous to distinguish, Italian madrigals even more numerous, Schütz sinfoniae sacrae pieces, and masses by Josquin, Ockeghem, Obrecht, and others.....' Palestrina, Tallis and Byrd are acknowledged in the same source and MC. (P.116) names specific works by Willaert, Lasso, Hassler and Purcell as examples of expressive chromaticism. The 1957/59 reconstructions of Tres Sacrae Cantiones by Gesualdo (b. c. 1560) are testimony to a deep interest in sixteenth century music and musica reservata style and in TC.(p.195) Stravinsky quotes both the Spanish theorist, Cerone and the former master of music at St. Mark's, Zarlino, concerning the delicacy and freedom from improvised embellishment(1) of the performances of Renaissance madrigal singers.

It is the same posthumous TC. commentary that points us in the direction of our own age. ' I would rank the highest flights of the time (Jacobsleiter, Pierrot Lunaire) with the greatest achievements of the past'(p.189). Here we begin to see a reinforcement of the case for dividing his choral writing into pre- and post-1950 phases. For his principal acknowledged tastes in existing choir music centre either on unaccompanied works of the Renaissance (or earlier), comparable to the first phase, or else on the creations of the second Viennese school, to which Robert Craft was such an astute guide before and during the second.

1 CO. p.139.

Stravinsky reacted to serialism with extreme caution - witness its late adoption in his creative life span - and always interpreted the 'Method' freely. Thus Francis Routh is able to suggest that 'the Webern songs (unspecified). . . introduced to him an "entirely new concept of order". So serialism seemed not so much a dogma to be obeyed, as a creative principle to be interpreted'.¹ It was inevitably a system of compositional organisation bound to appeal in some measure to a man of Stravinsky's calculating, proportion-obsessed mind. Yet in detail, and specifically in choral terms, the composer could be critical of the most obvious models. He preferred Webern's instrumental music to the late cantatas and is severe on the latter in these comments from TC. (P.94):

'Webern's choral harmony disconcerts me, too, for example at the words "Im Dunkel", near the end of the First Cantata (Op.29 of 1939), and again in the parallel-interval passages in the fifth movement of the Second Cantata (Op.31 of 1943). I can see the interval logic and the purity in these constructions. And I am willing to believe that they derive from a teleological conception of form, though some might call it a mania for total serial identification. But it is harmony, after all, and in the case of the "Im Dunkel" passage, banal harmony'.

Apart from Schoenberg and Webern, the influence of twentieth century colleagues at either end of his career seems slight. Stravinsky may even have consciously deflected his attention from other artistic currents of his own time. 'What I hear, moreover, is what comes my way, and that is rarely of my own choosing' (DD.p.59).² We do, however, know³ that Stravinsky, who for most of his life shared the same publisher with Benjamin Britten, did ask to be supplied with all of the English composer's latest scores and shared a number of nominal ideas with him.

A whole study could explore comparisons between these two men as

1 op cit. p.151.

2 The rest of this passage reflects the composer's suspicion of anything approaching the avant garde: 'Chronochromie, by M. Malraux's favourite composer, came my way recently; its force de frappe is so great I wonder the marimbas, xylophones and gongs did not collapse from metal fatigue'.

3 John Cheshire, BBC Radio 3 talk, 6 Mar. 1977.

choral writers for Britten's catalogue of pieces in this medium easily matches that of Stravinsky's in size and in the variety of choral timbres employed. They both expressed preferences for children's voices in certain works, beginning with the Symphony of Psalms and including such diverse works of Britten's as the Ceremony of Carols for boys' voices (1942), the Missa Brevis (1959) and the large-scale multi-choral pieces such as the St. Nicolas cantata (1948), Spring Symphony (1949), and War Requiem (1962). Religious texts figured prominently in both cases with some very close parallels. After a dramatic, almost violent rendering of the medieval Lyke-wake Dirge in Britten's Serenade for solo tenor, strings and horn (1943) there came the hypnotically subdued version for female chorus punctuating numbers of Stravinsky's 1952 Cantata. After the Chester miracle play Noye's Fludde, an hour-long children's opera of vivid colour first performed at the Aldeburgh Festival of 1958, came Stravinsky's television drama The Flood (1961/62), incorporating some of the same play but much more besides in a work one-third the length of Britten's! Both composed miniatures entitled Abraham and Isaac, the first an English-text 'Canticle' for alto and tenor soloists of 1952 (Britten), the second a 'sacred ballad' in Hebrew for baritone and chamber orchestra ten years later (Stravinsky). And both took extracts from the Latin Requiem, Britten in the portentous War Requiem and Stravinsky in the Requiem Canticles (1966). Comments on the latter (qv.p. 176 above) allude to Stravinsky's awareness of the Englishman's output. The American Show magazine in February, 1964 published an attack by Stravinsky on Britten's War Requiem, including a criticism of the use of Hollywood-type fanfares - in retrospect somewhat audacious considering the Tuba mirum section of the 1966 work. Aesthetically the two composers at the peaks of their careers were very different. But they did exchange (unwittingly?) certain technical elements. It was Stravinsky who 'depersonalised' the

words of God by setting them chorally in Babel (1944) then Britten reiterated the idea by pairing the solo voices for God's pronouncements in Abraham and Isaac just as two solo basses take on the same role in The Flood. The latter, according to WW. (p.520 footnote), also succeeds in sharing a note-row with one occurring (rarely) in Britten's opera The Turn of the Screw (1954). Perhaps the unmeasured choral speech, sparingly added to the concluding pages of the Requiem Canticles, may have been an echo, albeit distant, of what theatrical impact such a device can have, as in Pleni sunt coeli in the fourth section of the War Requiem.

Theatrical could be the adjective which separates Britten from Stravinsky. The English composer does not fear immediate communication and unlike his peer was prepared throughout his creative life to use a full palette of aural effects, with discrimination and with subtlety but always in a varied and powerful response to the chosen texts. These included vernacular and universal Latin, such as that for the story of the Good Samaritan in the Cantata Misericordium celebrating the Red Cross centenary of 1963. More akin to the drastically pruned works of Stravinsky's serial period are the 'church parables' of Britten (such as Curlew River, 1964) in which a new mood of austerity is struck. But there are still here the dimensions of costume and gesture - the very elements of theatre which marked not only the Japanese noh drama, from which these works derive, but also the medieval church drama which heralded oratorio proper. Only The Flood capitalises on this mode of presentation, the majority of Stravinsky's sacred output relying on a static, abstract manner of performance. This again delineates the composer's artistic (and spiritual?) philosophy which is rarely pursued with such rigour and consistency by other musicians of this century.

Those modern composers of stature who were drawn to religious themes tended to do so either through isolated miniatures or through the

occasional sacred/dramatic work of major proportions. Thus either side of the Symphony of Psalms came Honegger's 'dramatic oratorio' King David (1921) and Walton's Belshazzar's Feast (1931). Both may be vast Romantic, quasi-operatic canvases but each contains notable vocal features, some finding a place in Stravinsky's output, others remaining foreign to him. The separate, short scenes in Honegger's piece are linked by a spoken narration (in French) in the manner to be adopted five years later in Oedipus Rex. The voice of David is superimposed parlando on a wordless female chorus in the scene The Lamentations of Gilboa, a chorus reminiscent in its repeated melodic line if not its vocalisation of the Scene ii lullaby 'Sur ce lit elle repose' in Stravinsky's Persephone (1933/34). Nothing in Stravinsky compares with the gargantuan sound achieved in Walton's 35 minute oratorio. In specifically choral terms the voices here range freely from massive homophony, and one thrilling shout, to mellifluous imitation across eight parts. It is these solid divisi vocal textures more than the jazz elements and mammoth instrumentation which contrast so markedly with Stravinsky's choral writing and is perhaps the chief component of nineteenth century choral music which he wished to eschew.

Wordless vocal parts have been numerous since Debussy's Sirènes movement of 1898. A Mass of Life (1904-5) and A Song of the High Hills (1911-12) by Delius join Holst's Neptune (1914), Ravel's Daphnis and Chloe ballet (1912) and Vaughan Williams' Flos Campi (1925) in adopting this technique. Much later came Schoenberg's Prelude to Genesis for orchestra and wordless chorus, Opus 44 (1945)¹ and a vocalised choral waltz accompanies the boys' 'Sumer is icumen in' in Britten's 1949 Spring Symphony. Closest to this idiom in Stravinsky's

1 Stravinsky's Babel was a contribution to this composite work.

work are brief passages of humming in Zvezdoliki (1911-12) and The Nightingale (1908-14).¹ Choral parlando, introduced briefly in The Wedding and then more extensively employed after Threni, remained a rare mode of expression with composers until post-World War II. Indeed, the notated clamando in The Wedding (before fig. 125) must be among the earliest examples to follow that for solo voice in Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire (1912). The Soldier's Tale (1918) offers a further example of rhythmically precise (solo) speech. In 1917 Holst had included choral parlando in the Hymn of Jesus for double choir and orchestra. Then in 1930 Ernst Toch, in Germany, gave a performance of his amusing Geographical Fugue for four speaking voices written in conventional notation as monotone rhythms. The flowering of the technique came in more recent times. Cinq Rechants (1946) for twelve solo voices by Messiaen, Job - Sacra Rappresentazione (1950)² and Songs of Liberation (1955) by Dallapiccola and the extensive St. Luke Passion (1965) of Penderecki all contain parlando for massed voices. (Further comments on Stravinsky's use of choral speech are included under 'The Technique' below.)

In The New Music³ Reginald Smith Brindle considers that '..... Eastern Europe is the last refuge of great religious music' and in choosing Penderecki and Ligeti as evidence of this rightly suggests that 'where the Church is persecuted, it thrives most strongly'. Penderecki produced his moving a cappella Stabat Mater in 1962 and in 1970 and 1971 respectively his Entombment of Christ and Resurrection of Christ. The

1 An optional passage of humming for the chorus at fig.5.

2 In this work the chorus speaks and sings the words of God and of Satan, other characters being represented by solo singers - the whole in the manner of a medieval mystery play.

3 O.U.P., 1975, p.184.

Hungarian György Ligeti composed a Requiem (1965) and his most famous choral piece, Lux Aeterna (1966) for sixteen-part unaccompanied choir, exploits slow sustained chord clusters with cumulative reinforcement of individual notes by staggered attacks from the divisi sections of voices. The first choral entry in Threni is a brusquer version of the same texture.

It has also been the composers of Eastern Europe who have in recent years produced some of the most complex and adventurous choral scores. A work such as Lutoslawski's Trois Poemes d'Henri Michaux (1963) for twenty-voice choir and orchestra displays a vast array of voiced and unvoiced choral effects. Chord clusters, vocal glissandi, speech and aleatoric timings for the singers amply match the colours of the piano-dominated orchestral sound and Lutoslawski's approach to his chosen texts seems not unlike Stravinsky's own philosophy of the word as sound material.

'Releasing the language from the rigid forms of verse, and also of the word in an elementary state which displayed the components of language, syllables, vowels, sounds etc. as yet without any combination providing meaning had already been indicated by Stockhausen in his electronic composition Gesang der Jünglinge, and by some other compositions, for instance by Luciano Berio, worked out but not performed until the 1960's. Kagel, Ligeti, Schnebel and of course Lutoslawski can also be mentioned in this respect'.¹

Here is an extreme musical credo being ascribed to leading members of the avant garde and we have already noted Stravinsky's suspicion of that direction in modern music. Yet his remarks concerning textual intelligibility (qv. Chapter 3) can be construed in much the same vein.....¹ from the moment song assumes as its calling the expression of the meaning of discourse, it leaves the realm of music and has nothing more in

¹ Helmut Kuhn (trans. Frederick Bishop), sleeve note to Ein Dokument - a recording of works by Messiaen, Boulez, Lutoslawski and Stravinsky (Canticum Sacrum) conducted by Bruno Maderna at the 1973 Salzburg Festival (6.48066 EK).

common with it' (PM,p.42) 'words were what I needed, not meanings' (MC,p.83). Who knows but that Stravinsky, had he lived another decade, would have gradually absorbed the sonorities of his 'progressive' contemporaries into his own choral vocabulary in the same way that serialism followed his neo-classicism and Russian nationalism.

However, if the experiments of the 1960's came too late to colour Stravinsky's attitude to the choral medium we must nevertheless accept that many of the vocal effects obtained in the earlier twentieth century works already mentioned did not become a part of the composer's individual musical language. As early as 1915, and therefore contemporary with The Wedding, Milhaud's incidental music to Claudel's adaptation of Choéphori (after Aeschylus) included whistling, shouts and hisses in vocal writing which was mainly pitchless declamation. But such realism - theatricalism, even - appealed only briefly to the Russian, and then chiefly through the medium of orchestral ballet scores. When it came to Cocteau's adaptation of Oedipus Rex the drama had to be stylised, the emotions more controlled - and this in the most Romantic of Stravinsky's choral pieces. From then on a much more ascetic concept of sung music develops and it is significant that outside of Persephone and The Rake's Progress all subsequent choral works are to religious texts.

When assessing Stravinsky's writing for massed voices we may not be able to draw more than the occasional superficial parallel with contemporary artists' creations. Yet both the critic and the impresario must be aware of titles which compare on grounds of texts chosen and forces employed, if not of specific vocal styles and techniques. Mass settings comparable to Stravinsky's in proportions have included Vaughan Williams' in G minor (1920-21) with a strong neo-Renaissance atmosphere and Hindemith's of 1963, both for unaccompanied mixed choirs (the

English setting normally performed liturgically with all-male voices).¹ Poulenc's unaccompanied Mass dates from 1937 and Kodaly's Missa Brevis, with an original organ accompaniment is exactly contemporary with Stravinsky's. Psalm texts have interested a number of twentieth century composers as far back as Florent Schmitt, whose setting of the Vulgate psalm 46 for large chorus, soprano solo, orchestra and organ was first performed in Paris in 1910. Kodaly's Psalmus Hungaricus of 1923 requires a tenor soloist plus chorus and orchestra as does Roussel's Psalm 80 (with an English text!) of 1928. Two later works on psalm texts and far removed in style from Stravinsky both employ Hebrew translations. They are Schoenberg's Opus 50b Out of the Depths (psalm 130) of 1949 and Bernstein's Chichester Psalms (numbers 2, 23, 100, 108, 131 and 133) of 1965 intended for an all-male cathedral choir. It is Schoenberg who also provides two works for Stravinsky's much favoured adult male voices. These are the Six Pieces for (four-part) unaccompanied male chorus (1929-30) and A Survivor from Warsaw for reciter, men's chorus and orchestra (1947) employing an English text with German and Hebrew interpolations. One outstanding work for female choir with orchestra, at times recalling the ostinato-like phrases of the Persephone choruses, is Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine (1944) by the sadly berated author of Chronochromie (qv. p. 220 footnote above), Olivier Messiaen.

A solitary work which provides very interesting parallels with some of Stravinsky's choral pieces is Apparebit Repentina Dies for mixed chorus and brass which Hindemith wrote for Harvard University in 1947 at the time when Stravinsky was in Los Angeles completing his Mass

1 Hindemith's Sanctus takes exactly the snap rhythm of Stravinsky's 1948 setting.

for mixed voices and double wind quintet. Hindemith's music requires ten instruments - the brass of Stravinsky's score plus four horns and tuba. The Latin text of Apparebit predates that of the Dies Irae of the Roman Catholic Requiem to which it is remarkably similar in meaning. A special feature of the poem is its acrostic form, an early example of stanzas beginning with successive letters of the alphabet. From this we look forward ten years to the text of Threni whose choral music emphasises the literary structure by setting the initial (Hebrew) letters. Hindemith also seems to share with his contemporary the avoidance of self-conscious solo characterisation of deities. He employs the bass chorus for both the words of Christ and an implied narrator (as well as a three-part women's chorus symbolizing those who are judged).

In short, there is a process of cross-fertilisation to be unravelled in twentieth century choral music as in any other medium (we have already noted the striking similarities between the secular masterpieces The Wedding and Carl Orff's Carmina Burana). However, Stravinsky's influence purely in terms of choral scoring and vocal timbres can only be slight alongside so much more varied and inventive writing for massed voices. His originality might lay in text selection, formal schemes and instrumental combinations but a general summary of the composer's choral technique will reveal limitations in that specific area.

The Technique

Language - 'I wanted the Hebrew to be sung in a different manner than in the religious tradition, which is fixed. I did the same thing in Russian. My Noces is not sung like Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff (sic.), after all. . . .'¹

Thus Stravinsky comments on his Abraham and Isaac, implying that most ritualistic use of language calls forth pre-determined musical idioms. He clearly wishes to avoid such conditioning and the choral ballet at one end of his career and the stricter serial works at the other represent strong attempts to set languages independently of traditional associations. However, during the middle portion of his creative life, from the time of his first totally sacred composition (Pater Noster) to the mixed style of the Canticum Sacrum, Stravinsky favoured tongues connected for centuries with established church ritual and these drew from the composer formal choral sounds which authoritatively suggest the label 'hieratic'. He chose Church Slavonic for his most austere Sacred Choruses and Ciceronian Latin for their re-issue in the 1940's together with the major religious works, the Symphony of Psalms, Mass and Canticum Sacrum. In all, eleven original choral compositions plus the 1957/59 completions of three motets by Gesualdo employ Latin texts.

As well as in the 'sacred ballad' Abraham and Isaac, Hebrew is used for the choral lettering of Threni, again with an archaic ceremonial quality avoided in the folk-song-like melismas of the solo work. Babel was the first English text to be set and the remaining sacred works in this language all come from the final serial period. Russian, apart from its use in Zvezdoliki, is confined to the secular works

¹ Interview with Nicole Hirsch, Paris Express 6 Sep. 1964, quoted in SPD. p.205.

of the early years. Italian crept into the version with solo voices of Pulcinella (1919-20), French for the chorus and soloists in the melodrama Persephone and German for the arrangement of Bach's Vom Himmel hoch variations.

It has been emphasised in considering the separate choral works that Stravinsky chose languages more for their potential resonance than their literal meanings. 'Although I do not understand Hebrew, I have fallen in love with the language.....'¹ Additionally, the numerical preference for Classical Latin supports the composer's objective detachment, especially from those texts exhibiting a timeless, spiritual quality, and it doubtless also represented a conscious artistic desire to achieve a universal means of communication. To the modern choralist this is a welcome linguistic bias because not only is Latin familiar to singers of all nationalities but it is dominated by long vowel sounds which offer a fuller 'bloom' to vocal tone and assist in blending massed voices. Uncertainties in pronunciation are an inevitable consequence of utilising a dead language and this problem has been raised above in the chapter dealing with Oedipus Rex. Yet coping with Ciceronian consonants is as nothing compared to grappling with Russian, Slavonic, French or English for the non-native speaker. Any choir performing works in these tongues must seek the help of a language coach (or a multi-lingual conductor!). This will simply be to fix a common pronunciation of all consonants and vowel sounds,² not, as will be seen below (p.252), to learn standard syllable stresses or other features of phrase by phrase verbal metre. On the

1 Stravinsky quoted in WW. p.529.

2 Stravinsky's 1964 version of the Credo contains his own table of English phonetics as well as a complete phonetic version of the accompanying Slavonic text.

latter Stravinsky's view remained somewhat arbitrary to the last.

Textual treatment - Before summarising the technical details

of Stravinsky's choral settings it is worth considering how the character of the words chosen, irrespective of language, influenced the general musical response. Such concepts as form, medium (including the selection of instrumental accompaniments), textures and over-all mood and dynamics can conventionally reflect the nature of a text's message. But Stravinsky rarely troubled to indulge in musical pictorialism of an overt kind. For example, the obvious suggestiveness of Psalm 150 ending the Symphony of Psalms, brings forth no literal response from choir or orchestra. Any response to verbal imagery is of a far more subtle kind, such as the brief crescendo underlining 'Incandescent terror' at the beginning of the Anthem.

Stravinsky's sobriety can in fact be traced to his very selection of sacred texts. It would be tasteless to attempt a dramatic underlining of all but a few words in liturgical writings, and a large number of works take as their material Orthodox or Roman Catholic liturgy. From the Three Sacred Choruses, via the Mass, to extracts from the Requiem service used in Intuitus and in the Requiem Canticles, ritual demands restraint. There is even a churchiness about the choruses in The Flood - significantly a Latin text Te Deum amidst an English television drama. Psalms for the Vulgate are at the heart of the choral Symphony and are used in Canticum Sacrum.¹ The latter's biblical texts mix Old and New Testaments in a generally exhortatory mood which does suggest a formally symmetric scheme (qv. pp. 113ff above).

¹ Jeremy Noble (New Grove, Vol.18, p.254) suggests that the choice and order of texts in the Symphony of Psalms, 'as in Stravinsky's later religious works', form a 'highly characteristic sequence of repentance, faith and praise'.

The aphoristic New Testament Sermon concentrates on one notion of hope and balances the non-biblical Prayer of Thomas Dekker. Strictly biblical is the Old Testament Lamentations of Jeremiah, the subject of Threni and the largest sacred text used by Stravinsky. Again drama is replaced by meditation, aphorism and prayer and a considerable proportion of this text is given over to solo voices. Penitence, death and Judgement seem to be major concerns treated by the composer. In the Cantata the choir's anonymous fifteenth-sixteenth century dirge is of an almost incantatory nature and in the Anthem Elliot's philosophical poetry calls forth a clinical a cappella setting in severe twelve-note style. This little work does respond to the mirror cadences which form such a strong structural feature of the two English verses. The only truly narrative text comes from the Old Testament (Genesis) in Babel where the chorus plays only a slight role alongside a solo, spoken, narration.

The allocation of words to solo and to massed voices follows logically upon the actual selection of texts. As remarked above narration is normally in the hands of solo singers/speakers, as in Babel and the central movement of A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer, whereas specifically ritualistic lines remain the domain of the impersonal chorus. Interestingly, Stravinsky follows a long European tradition in his choice of solo verses (Tuba mirum and Lacrimosa) from the Requiem (in Requiem Canticles).

Where there is word repetition the composer usually matches this in his music. Examples include the verses of Elliot's 'The dove descending' and the authentic repetition of Hosanna after both the Sanctus and Benedictus portions of the Mass. But such repetitions as those of the single word 'credidi' in bars 204ff. of the Canticum Sacrum are unusual and in this instance represent a deliberate reinforcement of the subject of Faith, central to this particular piece. Word-setting

throughout the corpus of sacred works is predominantly syllabic, as can be seen in the summary table on p. 237. This, to a marked degree, affects the melodic character of the writing for individual voice parts. A rapid succession of words at all but the slowest tempi is anti-lyrical and inevitably disturbs tonal sonority and true legato flow - one of the strongest traits of a mass choral sound.

With the subject of verbal underlay is naturally linked that of metrical accentuation in all of the languages set by Stravinsky. His idiosyncratic views on this matter, from the early Russian period onwards, have been outlined in Chapters 1 and 3 and in the detailed discussions of his works both sacred and secular. Perhaps we need only consider here the measure of importance this criticism deserves. SPD. (p.107) reminds us of how severe this criticism has been with two examples from the earliest part of the composer's career. 'The music of the Japanese Lyrics is enchanting, marvellous, but what is the meaning of this constant and stubborn disharmony between musical metre and text? Some of the accents are at the eighth, some at the quarter'.¹ Again, writing to Stravinsky on 24 September 1913, 'Why does the musical metre not correspond to the metre of the texts ? If it's your secret, tell it to me'. Mlaskovsky, the composer, wrote to Prokofiev on 16 June 1913: '.....the Japanese romances.....could be sung with the correct accent only by moving them one eighth to the left.....(Stravinsky) contradicts every principle, and condescendingly'. However, it should be noted that the Japanese Lyrics were settings (in various translations including Russian, French, English and German) for solo soprano and piano or chamber orchestra and as such would attain a degree of clarity in performance

1 Vladimir Derzhanovsky, editor of the Russian music journal Muzyka, in a letter to Stravinsky dated 12 July 1913.

which is seldom possible even with the best trained choral forces. Only with such audibility, and then with an audience conversant with the chosen language, does this freedom of verbal accentuation irritate. Provided rhythmic licence occurs in a musically substantial context then we must allow it as artistic individuality. '..... nobody would question the fact that a setting of words is justified solely by its musical quality, otherwise why set them at all?'¹ Indeed, one can agree with Boys' claim that Britten held the same view as Stravinsky in making the words and syllables fit the musical, rhythmic sense if not the 'discursive sense', individual words dictating the setting rather than the over-all metre associated with whole phrases or sentences of text. This critic's only acknowledgement of a metrical problem again quotes a solo item:

'The "problem" arises when, as he often does, Stravinsky, like Britten, synchronizes naturally light "upbeat" words such as "to", "and", or "the" with the already suggested strong pulse of the music. Such a case occurs in the Ricercar I (rehearsal figs.2 - 3) of the Cantata'.²

To this particular point Stravinsky would probably reply that much of his choral music should be performed, like modern editions of Renaissance motets, with no slavish adherence to bar-line stresses. Indeed, Craft has been quoted (p.117 above) as saying that in the Carites chorus of Canticum Sacrum the composer originally barred each of the three canonic voices according to its own independent rhythm - true polyphonic separation. Yet in the same work what is arguably the most vital piece of both serial and a cappella writing in Stravinsky's choral repertoire, bars 274ff. of Brevis Motus Cantilenae, begins each of the four imitative voices

1 Henry Boys, 'A Note on Stravinsky's Settings of English',

The Score Vol.20, June 1957, p.14.

2 *ibid.* pp.17-18.

on the beat with the accented word 'et'. Perhaps there needs to be less metrical accent when performing the late works for voices compared to the choreographic rhythms of the pre-1930 theatre pieces. And when cross-accentuation is underlined by repetition, as in the reiterations of 'Oedipus' in the opera-oratorio's opening chorus, does that not enhance the rhythmic interest of the music with little damage to verbal intelligibility? Certainly where ill-rehearsed choruses and/or unfavourable acoustics are encountered textual clarity becomes merely an academic point.

Pictorialism is so remote from Stravinsky's aesthetic that we must look hard to discover any but the most discreet literalism in his text settings. Even in the larger-scale secular pieces (qv. Chapter 7) the composer satisfies himself more with a general mood than with a word by word response to the language. Any choral composer walks a delicate tight-rope between naive word-painting and bland abstraction. For Stravinsky, once the drama of the Russian ballets was behind him, understatement took the place of literalism. A simple illustration of this is in the restraint afforded the word 'Alleluia' in both the Symphony of Psalms and in the later A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer. The monotonies of 'unam.....Ecclesiam'/'unum baptisma' in the Credo of the Mass and the 'incandescent' crescendo of the Anthem are as explicit as anything in the vocal works and there are few other examples to match these. The choral singer faced with the musical demands of the serial pieces is likely to feel that blandness is total in this phase and in the angular polyphony of the serial canons we do reach a mechanical note-spinning far removed from the programmaticism of an earlier musical age. Indeed, if 'expressionism' (Honegger, Milhaud ?) reacted against the vagueness of Impressionism it also stood in stark contrast to the brittle, calculated sounds of serial Webern, the principal model for

Stravinsky's last style. But a balanced view of the latter's response to words must on the one hand take into account moments like the vivid Dies Irae in the final Requiem Canticles (significantly a bold example of note/chord repetition within a serial context and followed by an equally explicit solo at Tuba mirum) and on the other recognise an over-all philosophy of non-expressive (viz. non-indulgent) music stated as early as the Autobiography of the 1930's. In other words, Stravinsky is consistent in his restraint and most economical in his literalism.

Media - Stravinsky's orchestral palette was wide in the traditional nineteenth century sense up to and including the Rite of Spring (1913) and exotic instruments are still appearing as late as 1958 with the flugelhorn and sarrusophone of Threni. Novelty of instrumentation in both early and late works is invariably apt for the mood of the compositions concerned - a general rather than detailed pictorialism. One could easily quote the ritual gamelan spirit of The Wedding's unique instrumentation along with the bell resonances closing the Requiem Canticles. The pianos of the Symphony of Psalms are in the same mould. A curiously awesome solemnity is required from the bass register instruments of Introitus where the scale of the forces used is in marked contrast to so many of the serial compositions. In most of these, beginning at Canticum Sacrum, a large orchestra is paraded but with often chamber-like delicacy, which must come as substantial relief to chorus directors feeling that only a selection of hand-picked choristers (or a compact professional chamber choir) will do justice to these works.

If the skill in instrumentation and orchestration is only what one expects from the creator of Firebird, Petrushka and The Rite, it does

TABULAR ANALYSIS OF PRINCIPAL CHORAL

	Choral bars	Unacc. bars	Choral textures	Homo- phony	Poly- phony	Sylla- bic	Melis- matic
Pater Noster(1926)	37	37	SATB	37		37	-
(1949)	45	45	"	45		45	-
Symph.of Ps. Mv.1	46	-	SATB	33	-		1
2	50	8	"		32		1
3	139	-	"		12		1 - 2
Credo (1932)	79	79	SATB	79		77	1 - 2
Ave Maria (1934)	20	20	SATB	20		19	1
(1949)	35	35	"	35		25	9 - 1
Mass Kyrie	39	-	SSAATB		11		6
Gloria	32	-	SATB	32	-	32	-
Credo	47	6	SAATTBB	42	5		5
Sanctus	44	2	SATB	44	-		1 -
Agnus	29	28	SATB		13		1 -
Canticum Sac.Mv.1	17	-	SATB	17	-	17	-
3	75	1	SAT/SA/ SATB		47		3
4	20	7	ST/AB/ SATB		7		1 -
5	17	-	SATB	17	-	17	-
Threni Prima	101	-	U/SA/ SATB	4	19	101	-
Tertia	100	5	SA/TB/AB ATB/SATB	63	21		1
Quinta	14	-	SAATB U/SATB	10	-	10	-
Sermon, (Narrative), Prayer	40	9	SATTBB/ SATB		32	40	-
	35	7	B/T/SA/ SATB		12		2
Anthem	43	43	SA/TB/SATB	3	40		2
Requiem Canticles	69	1	SAT/SATB/ U/SA	50	13		1
Wedding Act I i	114	7	SA/SAATTBB				
" ii	149		SATB/ (B)B				
" iii	66		etc.				
Act 2	173						
Oedipus Rex Act 1	185		T/B/TTBB	134			5
Act 2	259	24	"	195			5

1 minimum of three notes per syllable

have the effect of throwing into stark relief the limited vocal timbres produced in so many of the sacred choral compositions. The table on p. 237 clearly reflects the composer's acknowledged distaste for unsupported vocal sounds. Only the Three Sacred Choruses and the serial Anthem are completely a cappella though the instrumental accompaniments to many of the larger-scale serial works are reduced to single instruments (hence the optional string doublings in the difficult canons of Canticum Sacrum). None of the unaccompanied pieces breaks with the tradition of SATB scoring, save for the two-voice beginnings to each of Elliot's Anthem verses. This four-part grouping dominates all the pre-1950 religious works except for the male voices (mainly in four parts) used in Zvezdoliki. More variety of choral combinations comes with the last phase of writing and the changes, if any, are towards a thinner choral texture of less than four voices. Divisi scoring is very rare and often when it occurs (for example, in The Wedding or the Credo of the Mass) it merely separates part of one section for the purpose of reinforcing another and thus seldom provides real divisi parts. Even the Orthodox Sacred Choruses reject the rich unaccompanied sonorities of double choir which so enhance the Rakhmaninov Vespers and in the works with orchestral support there is never an attempt at the solid tutti effects of a Verdi Requiem or a Walton Belshazzar.

At the other extreme there is scant employment of that searing effect the choral unison. This is mostly confined to equal voices rather than to the grand tutti. However, from The Wedding via the Mass to Threni Stravinsky has seen fit to request substantial solos from members of the chorus, very prominently and elaborately in the case of the Mass.

That Stravinsky had some concern for the quality of voices is evident from both his handling of solo parts and his choice of choral groupings. Bars 218ff. in Threni specify false alto from a designated

basso profundo and the expression con voce strascicante for a solo tenor. A certain penchant for male choruses is obvious from scores which include Zvezdoliki, Oedipus Rex, Babel and Introlitus. Female voices only are confined to basically secular pieces like the Russian Peasant Songs, parts of Persephone and the 1952 Cantata. But in terms of choral timbre the most striking detail is Stravinsky's occasional request for the choir to include children's voices (specifically male voices for the Symphony but implied male choristers elsewhere) instead of the normal female upper voices. This is understandable in a liturgically prompted piece such as the Mass but it is a very significant modification of choral sound in the Symphony of Psalms with its very full wind-band orientated orchestra. Here is a performing requirement being met more and more by conductors anxious to re-create 'authentic' Stravinsky and it is a very important clue to the manner of choral singing expected in this composer's music even when female voices are used. A clean, non-vibrato tone coupled with the slight edginess associated with European continental boys' choirs seems to be the preferred style and an appropriate adjunct to a 'non-expressive' performance.¹

Whatever the chosen media for the choral works Stravinsky remains enough of a craftsman to guard against most problems of dynamic balance. Even in the very lush scores for Zvezdoliki (using only twenty-four male voices according to Vlad) and the Symphony care is taken to protect the chorus from the full orchestral tutti. This is frequently reserved for purely instrumental interludes, especially in the serial compositions employing full orchestras. Elsewhere divisi string writing, muting or simply thinning of the accompaniment's texture enable a well focussed choral tone to emerge clearly.

1 N.B. Canticum Sacrum employs the term 'Discanti', as used in the Mass, for chorus sopranos but the Symphony retains 'Soprano' at the same time as requesting children's voices.

However, it must be reiterated that Stravinsky's bold instrumental strokes invariably command close attention from the listener and, as is recorded below (p. 254), there are few spectacular effects allocated to the voices. This fact, plus any local acoustical conditions and the unpredictable quality of amateur and even professional choirs, may cause concert promoters to assess fairly accurately the optimum number of singers preferred and even to consider unorthodox seating arrangements such as the side-by-side formation already suggested for the Mass (qv.p. 108 above). This writer regrets the absence of polychoral textures for voices, especially of the kind Britten employs in the Spring Symphony and the War Requiem where children's voices are set against adults. Not only would this have provided a potentially richer sonority to balance the large orchestras but it would have created automatic contrasts in choral tone (Stravinsky himself showing interest in children's voices) and opportunities for antiphonal scoring and a wider permutation of the basic SATB choir.

Texture - A contrast between homophony and polyphony can be assessed quite briefly from the relevant columns of the table on p. 237. Even given a degree of unison writing and bars which hover ambiguously between the two textures, the broad totals show a strong allegiance to vertically matched choral parts. (The close integration of soloists with chorus and its greater over-all length make The Wedding more difficult to quantify in this way but the bias is very much towards homophony in that work too.) A more horizontal conception of vocal lines becomes a principal feature of post-Canticum Sacrum years, apart from the fugues of the Symphony of Psalms. Imitative polyphony is indeed a prerequisite of serial style where the

shape and pitch implications of melodic lines are more crucial, at least in Stravinsky's Webernian idiom, than the resulting harmonic clashes. Yet the very last choral work, his Requiem, returns to a strongly chordal texture reminiscent of the more obvious Sacred Choruses of the early years.

It is purely subjective whether homophony or polyphony best create a hieratic atmosphere with strictly religious texts. But it is an indisputable fact that unaccompanied chant, with all choral voices synchronising the text most of the time, was the primary sound of Russian Orthodox worship as Stravinsky first knew it (qv. Chapter 3). This possibly explains not only the early preference for homophony in both the Sacred Choruses and the ritualistic but secular ballet of 1914-17 but also the overriding texture of those later works which used specifically liturgical words - the Mass, the Te Deum choruses of The Flood and the Requiem Canticles. What does not justify this style is any desire for textual clarity or rhythmic impact through synchronising the voices. The composer's attitude to the communicability of words is now well known and rhythmic reserve will be dealt with below.

The plainness which can result from unaccompanied choral homophony is offset in eighteenth and nineteenth century Russian church music by substantial portions of antiphonal scoring in often quite complex polychoral textures. In Stravinsky the textural interest is largely in the interplay of voices with instruments. Even the Canticum Sacrum, despite its famous historic, architectural setting, makes scant use of antiphony. The nearest approach to this is in the echo effects between solo baritone and (unison) chorus in the movement Brevis Motus Cantilenae. The Wedding employs similar contrasts of solo with tutti voices at figs. 45ff. and 75ff., though the latter also briefly alternates low and high choral voices. The composer's refusal to extend the number of real choral

parts much beyond those of the traditional SATB texture diminishes the effective potential of opposing blocks of massed voices and nowhere does any such opposition merit antiphonal staging of the singers. Such spatial displacement is more appropriate to instruments versus voices, as in the Mass (especially the Sanctus).

If unaccompanied singing was so distasteful to Stravinsky (qv. ED. quotation on p. 19 above) it is still significant that sparsely supported choral sounds are not confined just to the 'harmonically primitive' Sacred Choruses. The difficult serial polyphony of Canticum Sacrum is either totally a cappella or accompanied by a single instrumental strand and the Anthem is principally an unaccompanied polyphonic serial texture. 'It could be maintained that the profoundest change that took place in his music in the early 1950's was not the espousal of serialism at all - but an increasing preoccupation with counterpoint, first of lines - in such works as the Cantata (1952).....and then of notes - in parts of.....Threni (1958).....'¹ Francis Routh, in supporting this view, perhaps emphasises the influence of Western Roman Catholic sacred music on the later choral output. 'One of the chief results of Stravinsky's use of serialism was his discovery of a new form of choral polyphony, based on canon..... he saw polyphony as the true music of the Church, the one which most truly reflected its spiritual aspiration'.²

The completions of three motets by Gesualdo, made between 1957 and 1959 at a crucial stage in the composer's serial development, testify to Stravinsky's admiration for church polyphony. However, the following quotation concerning texture in Gesualdo's choral music reminds us of Stravinsky's basic compositional thinking and applies to both poly-

1 Jeremy Noble, 'Igor Stravinsky, 1882 - 1971', MT. June 1971, p.536.

2 Routh, op cit. p.126.

phonic and homophonic writing:

'His madrigals are almost all top heavy and even in the motets and responses the bass rests more than any other part.....my musical thinking is always centred around the bass (the bass still functions as the harmonic root to me even in the music I am composing at present)'¹.

A practical corollary of this is the absence of relatively high voice choral groupings in Stravinsky's own repertoire except where these have some instrumental support, frequently at a lower pitch. The first of the serial canons for choir (Caritas from the Canticum Sacrum) omits the choral basses but substitutes an instrumental line shared by one C trumpet and one bass trumpet frequently sounding below the tenors. However, the concept of harmonic roots in atonal music will be viewed with scepticism by choral singers trying to hear their separate melodic lines.

A further complexity of the serial polyphony in post-1950 works is the free crossing of voice parts. This is much rarer in the more solidly harmonic music up to the first choral movement of Canticum Sacrum and in preserving here the traditional layout of parts (with basses generally well separated from tenors and all voices fixed in comfortable tessitura) Stravinsky gives a clearly orthodox - even Orthodox - stamp to his choral scoring. That this is so is evidenced not only by the greater proportion of homophony to polyphony in his total output but by the dramatic return to conventional harmonic chant in four parts in the last sacred chorus, the Libera me of the Requiem Canticles.

Tonality - If Stravinsky preferred a harmonic (chordal)
 - texture this must be seen as part of the
 composer's individual tonal language, a subject outside the boundaries of
 the present study. Suffice it to say that choralists may encounter in

¹ CO. p. 47.

various works modal, tonal, atonal and strictly serial elements and in all of them a strong challenge to their level of intonation. The following opinion could apply to most works from Zvezdoliki to the Requiem:

'One may be justified in expressing some doubt about Stravinsky's use of purely instrumental dissonance in his vocal writing. It seems to come out clearly. It will take good and firm voices to make the dissonance structure of the music sound without ambiguity and an "out-of-tune" feeling'.¹

Phrygian modality passes from The Wedding, through the 1934 version of the Ave Maria and the 1948 Mass to the choral refrain of the Cantata (1952). In each of these works the chordal texture predominates and any potentially archaic harmony is spiced with discords, especially the major 7th, which include those that are unprepared and others resulting from the melodic shapes of individual lines. Purely tonal choral music is best demonstrated by Oedipus Rex which also bears a degree of expressive chromaticism seldom met anywhere in the sacred repertoire. Post-1950 expressive freedom of a different order results in serial organisation of both the strictly twelve-note pattern and that using partial series.² Canticum Sacrum is once more the pivotal work stylistically, introducing fully fledged canonic dodecaphony via dissonant homophony. The latter shares with pre-1950 examples (such as the Mass) features of bitonality and cross-relations which have been characteristic of Stravinsky's harmonic vocabulary since the vivid opening movement of Petrushka (1910/11).

Though the assumption of complete twelve-note technique marks the most important change in Stravinsky's approach to tonality it must be remembered that he modified serialism in his own individual manner and in ways which partially assist singers in coping with the Method's

¹ Ingolf Dahl, op cit. p.491.

² This last method is not applied to either sacred texts or to the choral medium. It is found, for example, in the Three Songs from William Shakespeare and In Memoriam Dylan Thomas.

technical demands. Chief of these are the free repetition of individual notes (though never enough to create real tonal pull) and the shaping of note rows to include triadic profiles. Vlad (p.231) comments on Stravinsky's 'triadic atonality' as follows:

'Outwardly, this return towards tonality might seem to be motivated by the inherent demands of choral writing. Actually, it is also, and in fact mainly, prompted by a more profound inner need for expression'.

Melody - It is probably safe to assume that an artist as profound as Stravinsky would not add chord shapes to his serial melodies merely to make them more palatable to singers. But it is also true that the human voice has traditionally been a perfect vehicle for long-phrased, mellifluous themes which many choralists would imagine to be the antithesis of serial melodies. This inevitably brings us into an area of extreme controversy when dealing with Stravinsky's choral music. ('That the bulk of Stravinsky's serial music is vocal in conception inevitably makes melody a central issue'.)¹ It has not only been the last phase of the composer's work which has been questioned on this count. In 1934 Constant Lambert wrote of Stravinsky's 'complete lack of any melodic faculty'² and Anthony Milner in 1957 describes a composer 'who bends all melodic styles and techniques to serve his profound realization of his own melodic limitations'.³ Milner's article does, however, give the background to this assessment by quoting the composer's own feelings:

'Melody is the intonation of the melos, which signifies a fragment, a part of a phrase. It is these parts that strike the ear in such a way as to mark certain accentuations. Melody is thus the musical singing of a cadenced phrase - I use the word cadenced in its general sense, not in the special musical sense. The capacity for melody is a gift. This means

1 Donald Mitchell, op cit. p. 121.

2 Lambert, op cit. p.94.

3 Anthony Milner, 'Melody in Stravinsky's Music', MT, July 1957, p.371.

that it is not within our power to develop it by study. But at least we can regulate its evolution by perspicacious self-criticism. The example of Beethoven would suffice to convince us that, of all the elements of music, melody is the most accessible to the ear and the least capable of acquisition. Here we have one of the greatest creators of music who spent his whole life imploring the aid of this gift which he lacked. So that this admirable deaf man developed his extraordinary faculties in direct proportion to the resistance offered him by the one he lacked, just the way a blind man in his eternal night develops the sharpness of his auditive sense'.

(PM. p.53)

The beginning of the Stravinsky quote hints at the composer's first melodic style and the general characteristics of nodal shapes and patterns repeated in an ostinato-like manner. These features, discernible in The Wedding, the Three Sacred Choruses and much of the Symphony, hark back to the primitive outlines of folk melodies and the oscillations of ancient church chant. Their positive effects can include a certain cumulative rhythmic tension (as in the ballet) and also a quasi-hypnotic aura akin to the priestly censer. They are a direct response to the composer's Russian background and an accurate one if Bartok's observations are to be noted:

'(Stravinsky) seldom uses melodies of a closed form consisting of three or four lines, but short motifs of two or three bars and repeats them a la ostinato. These short recurring primitive motifs are very characteristic of Russian music of a certain category'. 1

Describing also the mosaic-like quality of motifs in the Russian-period ballets Gerald Abraham refers to origins in art music of the more immediate past:

'Stravinsky's style had from the first been either frankly melodic (with curiously static melodies such as one often finds in the older Russian composers) or based on motives that are no more developed, in the Beethovenian sense, than the opening theme of Borodin's B minor symphony is developed'. 2

All of which answers, in part, Lambert's specific criticism that Stravinsky's

1 Quoted by Milner, *ibid.* p.370.

2 Abraham A Hundred Years of Music, 3rd edition, Methuen 1964, p.252.

melodic style 'has always been marked by extreme short-windedness and a curious inability to get away from the principal note of the tune'.¹

The finale of the Symphony of Psalms (fig.22ff.) classically illustrates the pivotal type of theme alluded to by Lambert, though few would now criticise the power of the censer's swing here. It is from the Symphony that Milner demonstrates other features of the composer's melos.² He cites the opening of the second movement (perhaps the Instrumental fugue better than the choral) as typical of melodies which 'fix the upper and lower limits of their range in their first few notes and then discuss the notes inside the range thus delimited'. By contrast, and much rarer for the composer, figs. 10 - 12 of the first movement produce an extended melody of very wide range initiated by the altos and basses in octaves but protracted with unusual angularity by the sopranos reaching nearly two octaves higher (qv.Ex. 6, p. 47 above).

Angularity, 'unvocal' leaps such as tritones, major 7ths and compound intervals, and the absence of any tonal polarity are the taxing characteristics of the fully serial phase. Passages like Ex.22(p. 116) from the Canticum Sacrum and Ex.39 (p. 183) from the Requiem Canticles are typical of the style in which additional performing problems come with the frequent absence of any instrumental assistance and the need to achieve security of separate choral lines in free polyphonic textures. Rhythm (summarised below) is less challenging in these works save for the fourth movement of the Canticum and a few bars in the Prayer (1960-61). But the impact of choral dodecaphony can be as diffuse on listeners as on choirs. Even with professional choral groups removing some of the inevitable anxieties associated with this idiom the

1 Lambert, op cit. p.98.

2 Milner, op cit. p.371.

angular lines interrupt the flow of vocal tone and disturb the dynamic balance between individual voice parts. Everyone's memories for thematic motifs and (where appropriate) recurring patterns are stretched to the utmost and frequent pointillist scoring (for example, in A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer) yields little more melodic interest in the instrumental parts. Even where 'triadic atonality' is strived for in Threni and less obviously in A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer, it does not detract from the acerbic, unemotional quality of the choral sound - it merely makes choral rehearsals fractionally less stressful.

The following remarks of Stravinsky's concerning Abraham and Isaac (1962-63) contain both his final artistic credo and a reference to a special feature of his melodic writing which can be traced back in various degrees through earlier works:

'The language led me to employ apophthegmas, as in Arab chant, for example in the repetition of the vowel a - a - a - a.....as for the serialism, that is perfectly natural; it is the other way which is exhausted. I cannot do otherwise.....Schoenberg understood this'.¹

Such melodic ornamentation could include the florid medievalism of the Gloria solos in the Mass as well as the more obvious opening of The Wedding. Lambert may have had the latter in mind when he cited orientalism in Glinka's Ruslan and Ludmila plus Debussy's thematic orientalism as two possible models for 'the oriental arabesques that occur from time to time in Stravinsky's melodic writing'.²

Outside of the serial melodies Stravinsky's choral output avoids in the main wide leaps and wide over-all vocal ranges. All the pre-1950 pieces have stepwise motion in abundance for all voice parts, though chromaticism is less plentiful (Zvezdoliki a notable exception). The Wedding shares with specifically church works like the Credo and

1 Quoted in SPD. p.205.

2 op cit. p.47.

the later Mass - and Requiem Canticles - long monotone phrases, usually in the soprano line, reminiscent of ecclesiastical chant. This is a noteworthy and evocative feature whereas the limited-range melodies and the preference for conjunct motion tend towards dullness, at least when compared to the mobility of lines in classical-romantic music.

Stravinsky treats all voice types with equal melodic importance. As quoted above, he himself stressed the role of the bass line and the sopranos, though rarely extended in tessitura, maintain their traditional prominence. Tenors are allocated some of the most athletic lines in the serial period, leaving altos with perhaps the least significant thematic contributions. It is they who establish the initial mood and character of the Symphony of Psalms. In the major works surveyed here Stravinsky utilises the following over-all vocal ranges:

S	dim.15	A	-	A flat
A	maj.14	F	-	E
T	maj.13	C	-	A
B	maj.14	F	-	E

Extremes are provided by the 1914-17 ballet, demanding a sustained high B natural from the sopranos and supplying an optional (very Russian) low C for the basses!

The emphasis given to this subject of melody is reinforced by the composer himself:

'I am beginning to think, in full agreement with the general public, that melody must keep its place at the summit of the hierarchy of elements that make up music. Melody is the most essential of these elements..... (it) survives every change of system'. 1

It is curious that this opinion predates his own change to twelve-note technique, the very stage at which Donald Mitchell reckoned melody became 'a central issue'. The truth is that Stravinsky can never be labelled a natural melodist - a sad shortcoming for a writer of vocal

music - and it is Mitchell who compounds this view (maybe unwittingly) by stating what most would now see and hear as the obvious:

'Much of what we regard as Stravinsky's most characteristic music is principally rhythmic and harmonic in interest.....One leaves, I think, a performance of Le Sacre or Les Noces or the Symphonies (of Wind Instruments) not - to put it crudely, though none the less accurately for that - whistling their non-existent 'tunes' but registering the impact of their rhythm and harmony'.¹

Rhythm - If the last quoted view of Stravinsky's 'non-melodic' nature seemed to seek support from predominantly early works, and those mainly instrumental, it is nevertheless true that the composer is no innovator in rhythmic writing for chorus outside of the Russian years. Indeed, after the dance-like syncopations of the voice parts in The Wedding Stravinsky settles into a pattern of providing choral elements which are invariably more reserved rhythmically than their accompanying instrumental sounds. The choral Symphony is an excellent illustration of this. In the first movement florid, neo-baroque orchestral parts decorate restrained, chant-like choruses. Movement 2 precedes a tranquillo vocal fugue with a sprightly instrumental specimen utilising mainly notes half the value of those given to the choir. The finale then makes a dramatic point of the monotone rhythms on 'Laudate DOMINUM' whilst again setting other, more hymnic vocal music off against his neoromantic orchestral 'chariots'.

Compared with the multiple metres and jagged syncopations of The Rite of Spring (1913) all of Stravinsky's choral works adopt a much simpler approach to vocal rhythms. Exactly the same reserve we have noted in the Symphony marks the voice parts of the final Requiem Canticles (cp. the latter's crotchet-minim homophony in the Exaudi chorus with the poly-metric Prelude and its instrumental cross-rhythms).

¹ Mitchell, op cit. pp.112-113.

This contrast between instrumental and choral techniques is so common - and the few unaccompanied choral works are not noted for their rhythmic individuality - that only the exceptional instances of rhythmic interest and certain idiosyncratic features need be summarised here.

This writer feels that the strongest rhythmic impact is still made by the unaccompanied serial chorus 'Et continuo clamans pater' in the fourth movement of the Canticum Sacrum (bars 274ff.). The accented initial syncopation assists the course of the canonic imitations far better than the pitch patterns. The same movement (bar 270) introduces rhythm aids from the composer to clarify the synchronising of choral with solo voices. A different notational aid serves a similar purpose in the finale of A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer. Both of these passages result in textual confusion however accurate the performance and their complexities therefore become somewhat academic. We must assume that the aim, certainly in the later work, is to deliberately blur the metric tread of the music and the inaccuracies of Stravinsky's own recording confirm such a view.¹

Vivid, even pictorial, use of rhythm attends the setting of the time-honoured words Dies Irae in the 1966 Requiem. At the other extreme an impressively fluid chant is set up in that work's final chorus where time signatures such as 11/4 and 13/4 underpin a free-rhythm speaking chorus. Parlando effects elsewhere are rhythmically notated (In the Requiem, Introitus, A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer and Threni). Pre-1950 the most notable uses of rhythm might include the Symphony of Psalms and the Mass. In the Gloria movement (fig.

1 WW. (p.524) offers a single instrumental bar from The Flood as a sample of unplayable modern rhythms where the only precise time signature would be 1680/3360!

14ff.) should be noted the artificial creation of pulse by means of vowel repetition (on one pitch). Both this movement and the Sanctus offer colourful ornamentation of phrases for soloists from the choir and the snap rhythm of Sanctus, echoed by the instruments, is most effective. In the long, central Credo syncopation and hemiola devices, with all rhythms in unison, never arrest but strangely encourage the chant-like impetus. The chugging setting of 'Laudate DOMINUM' in the Symphony takes on something like the character of Beethoven's 'fate' motif, but in all of Stravinsky's choral writing the music at fig.20 in the same movement is the most individual. Here is a brief, yet remarkably lyrical piece of imitation and its ecstatic quality is as much due to its gentle but characterful rhythm as to its melodic shape.

(Both The Wedding and Oedipus Rex have been described in detail and undoubtedly much of their colour, compared to the sacred works, comes from their choreographic and purely dramatic rhythms respectively.)

Rhythm affects and is affected by words. Stravinsky's arbitrary treatments of tonic accents, his deliberately inconsistent settings of the same word and his splitting of syllables by rests have been fully outlined. Sadly, such individual strokes seldom make the impact of, for example, the irregular jazz rhythms of the instruments in The Soldier's Tale. Instead they often serve as an irritant to more conservative choralists in rehearsal. For these there is a definite need to develop a faculty for counting note-values with no attention being paid to bar-line stresses or metrical accents of any conventional kind. In the later music

'It is the interval relationships which give the sense of pulse, for there is no harmonic rhythm (ie. metre) as in sixteenth century music to guide us; nor does the listener sense the metre Stravinsky has indicated. What then is the significance of this metre? I think it is a framework within which Stravinsky can organize his polyrhythms. His barlines,

drawn nearly always at regular intervals, are rather a measurement than the measure, within which he can deploy his phrases and canalize the texture and harmonic substance.....' 1

A note on tempo

Metronome markings appear on all the choral scores except for the first versions of the Sacred Choruses. A number of these markings were changed in Stravinsky's later revisions and such changes have been noted in the analyses above. It should, however, be emphasised that though Stravinsky built a reputation in his lifetime for being fastidious over tempi many critics have observed variations from the printed speeds in the composer's own performances. In fact, though we may feel less inclined to put our personal interpretative stamp on performances of this music it would be folly to ignore acoustical circumstances surrounding any one performance, whether it be in St. Mark's, Venice or a more intimate venue.

Over-all there is little choral music at fast tempi (another distinction between voices and instruments). The most exciting speeds are reserved for the two major secular pieces and this again supports the view that the composer had fairly fixed notions as to what constitutes a religious atmosphere. ' God must not be praised in fast, forte music, no matter how often the text specifies "loud"'.²

Vocal effects - ' one of my favourite sounds incidentally; make your throat taut and open your mouth half an inch so that the skin of your neck becomes a drum-head, then flick your finger against it: that is the sound I mean'.³

1 Henry Boys, op cit. p.16, concerning the Shakespeare songs of 1953.

2 DD. pp.44 - 5.

3 CO. p.44.

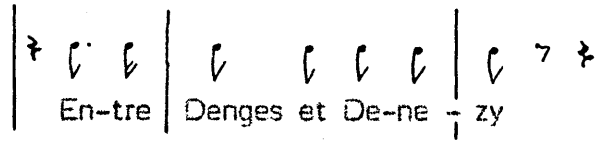
With this one might almost expect Stravinsky to go along with the view that today 'composers are not so much interested in choralism for its age-old beauty of sound, as for the sensational vigour, stridency, and potency of some unconventional usages and the attractive colour and imagery of others'.¹ But the composer's total repudiation of the experiments of the avant garde as well as his rejection of music for the pictorial underlining of words meant that he would only expect conventional choral sounds in his own works. Indeed, with the melodic, rhythmic and textural restraints already outlined, together with a relatively austere use of dynamic levels, the choral writing is less patently expressive than that of previous centuries.

The only 'special' techniques allowed by Stravinsky are melodrama, choral speech, humming and one choral shout. The bulk of these figure most prominently in secular works - the shout occurring at fig.55 of The Wedding. But some were transferred to the sacred repertoire. Humming appeared first as an optional effect in The Nightingale (Act I, 1908-9) and is used three years later in the male chorus of Zvezdoliki. Accompanied recitation (by solo voices) occurs in Persephone and despite the composer's misgivings about its effectiveness (qv. WW. p.105 footnote) reappears in A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer and again in The Flood. It is, however, choral parlando which represents the most ambitious departure from tradition.

Choral speech appeared briefly in The Wedding but much more extensively in the serial period. Threni re-introduces the technique subsequently employed in A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer, Introitus and the Requiem Canticles. With the exception of the latter's final Libera me chorus the rhythms of the choral speaking are always

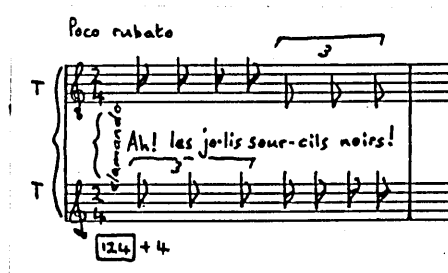
1 Reginald Smith Brindle, op cit. pp.173-4.

precisely notated after the manner of the solo speakers in The Soldier's Tale (1918):

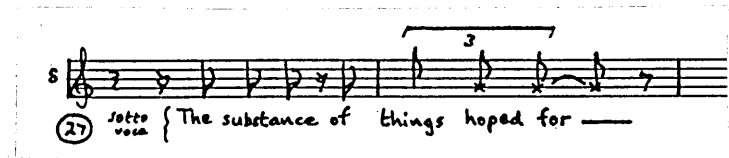


More curious is the fact that the earlier ballet and the later A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer extend this notation to indicate pitch variants:

Ex. 55 The Wedding:



S.N.P.



The last example, by fixing the note-heads on the last two words, establishes pitch precision shared by the other three choral parts and faithfully reproduced in the composer's own recording. Unclear is how and why that recording has E flat (C for the male voices in bar 28) as the pitch on which this quotation begins for all the sopranos and altos together. Such a pitch is foreign to the preceding tenor solo cue and to the string accompaniment at bar 27. (The example from the ballet is normally treated as a pitchless choral shout — but why the notation?). This is the only use of the Schoenbergian sprechstimme sign (♩) and so if the ballet extract is taken as an exception conductors should feel free to interpret speech inflections their own way, preferably achieving unanimity from all voices in a

section. This is again demonstrated by Stravinsky's own recording of Threni where the parlando, as in Introitus and the Requiem Canticles, has no pitch notation. The recording contains a pronounced downward inflection by all voices on the last syllable of each of bars 123, 125 and 127.

The Wedding and A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer are the only scores allocating speech to specific voice parts. All the other passages of parlando are for tutti chorus. That ending the Requiem Canticles is a most evocative 'crowd' effect, there being no rhythmic indications other than dotted bar-lines to indicate conducting beats. The chorus only gathers on the final notated 'LIBERA ME'.

(As the composer eschews all vocal 'sound effects' of an experimental nature it is worth pointing out the single, nearest such effect in The Wedding. Fig.100 is onomatopoeic (cutting wood ?) in whatever language is chosen.)

The Interpretation

'I have often said that my music is to be "read", to be "executed", but not to be "interpreted".....But you will protest, stylistic questions in my music are not conclusively indicated by the notation; my style requires interpretation. This is true and it is also why I regard my recordings as indispensable supplements to the printed music.....'

The stylistic performance problem in my music is one of articulation and rhythmic diction. Nuance depends on these. Articulation is mainly separation.....'

CO. p. 132)

If faithfully obeying the dictates of Stravinsky's scores seems to relieve conductor's of any artistic, interpretative decision-making, closer examination of those scores and even slight experience in directing typical singers and players will guard against complacency. For details such as dynamic markings need to be scaled according to local conditions, unpublished instructions such as type, size and displacement of performing forces need to be considered, and styles of articulation commonly adopted by choirs and orchestras need to be monitored.

The analyses of individual works deal with specific problems of dynamics. It is often the choral parts which omit crucial indications of volume or else print levels obviously inaccurate alongside of other markings for the instruments. (Vocal scores, like that of the Mass, should also be compared to full scores for variants not always explicable in terms of rehearsal pianos.) Missing dynamic marks should be added as early as possible in rehearsals bearing in mind the acoustics and instrumental sounds applicable in the final concert and the composer's rare use of gradual crescendi and diminuendi. His scores in this respect favour so-called terraced dynamics. The size and eventual positioning

of all the performers will have strong bearing on this matter.

Internal balance between sections of the choir becomes a more important issue with the polyphonic textures of the later works.

Exposed upward leaps give undue prominence to particular voices (especially lower male voices) and should be tackled discreetly.

Division of parts where one sub-section of voices reinforces another

(eg. The Kyrie of the Mass and Euntes chorus of the Canticum Sacrum)

need careful adjustment. Even rhythm and verbal accentuation, dealt

with below, will affect dynamic evenness. In Conversations the composer gives his own views on this question:

'I myself employ dynamics for various purposes and in various ways, but always to emphasise and articulate musical ideas. I have never regarded them as exploitable in themselves'.¹

'In places such as the tenor ricercare in my Cantata I ignore volume almost altogether. Perhaps my experience as a performer has persuaded me that circumstances are so different as to require every score to be re-marked for every performance. However, a general scale of dynamic relationships - there are no absolute dynamics - must be clear in the performer's mind.....My musical structure does not depend on dynamics - though my "expression" employs them. I stand on this point in contrast to Webern'.²

Flexibility in interpreting not only tempi but even some of the (visually) complicated rhythm patterns can be justified from the evidence of Stravinsky's own recordings as well as the obvious need to slow down metronomic rates in very ambient acoustics. The composer deemed tempo to be the principal performance problem in his music. 'A piece of mine can survive almost anything but wrong or uncertain tempo. (.....a tempo can be metronomically wrong but right in spirit, though obviously the metronomic margin cannot be very great).....'³ When asked by Craft if a composer should indicate how he wishes the conductor to beat his music Stravinsky replied:

1 CO. p. 143.

2 Ibid. pp. 143-144.

3 Ibid. p. 132.

'I think he should always indicate the unit of the beat and whether or not subdivision is to be felt. Also, he should show whether the conductor is to beat the beat or the rhythmic shape of the music if that shape is against the beat. For example, the triplets, three in the time of four, in Webern's "Das Augenlicht" and in my "Surge Aquilo"; I contend that to beat three here (in other words, to beat the music) is to lose the "in the time of four" feeling, and instead of a triplet feeling you have merely a three-beat bar in a new tempo'.¹

As with dynamics there are seldom gradual changes of speed, accelerando or rallentando, to tax the time-beater. More unnerving can be the shifting verbal accents, especially to singers unsympathetic to the composer's apparently arbitrary word-settings. These need to be rehearsed with minimal heavy accents but maximum attention to strict note-values particularly when these may be in a syncopated relationship to the main beats. Stravinsky is helpful to conductors in sub-dividing long bars by means of dotted bar-lines, as in the Libera me of the last choral work. It was his rehearsals for this piece which prompted the following general advice from the English choir-trainer John Alldis:

'Go for the spirit of the work and the rhythm of the words. It is a question of what comes first, the music or the notes. It is surprising how often the right notes emerge through singing the music'.²

In no score is the number of voices specified and these must vary with local conditions (Vlad, p.25, gives no source for the figure of 24 male voices in Zvezdoliki). Where appropriate the chorus must balance the accompanying instruments though all of the large-scale works are beautifully controlled in their avoidance of the full orchestral tutti. Some adjustments in stage-seating may preserve correct balance but in the event it is the quality of the vocal sound rather than the quantity of singers which counts. Some discussion has already been offered (p.239) concerning the composer's requests for children's voices and

1 Ibid. p.130.

2 John Alldis, 'Performer's Platform', Composer, Autumn 1969, p.8.

the implications this has on the 'ideal' choral tone for his sacred works. There is an obvious numerical implication here also for an opulent work like the Symphony of Psalms will demand substantial numbers of immature voices to equal those of adult singers. It must, however, be added that the demands on range, intonation and rhythmic precision of this work and the other requesting children's voices, the Mass, would easily be met by present day boys' concert choirs, youth choirs and collegiate establishments. It is in the post-1950 works that the singers' credentials come most into question.

This writer feels strongly that the late choral works were never intended for amateur chorallists. They clearly make not only the usual technical demands, especially of intonation¹, but also the psychological ones of preparing much atonal music unrelieved by contrasts of dynamics, textures, vocal timbres or even challenging rhythms in the main. A possible clue to the composer's intentions may be provided by the inclusion of 'voce del coro' solos in works as varied as The Wedding, the Mass and Threni. These solos make sufficient demands on vocal articulation to make the use of inexperienced or ill-equipped voices hazardous. Where professional (chamber) choirs are employed it is only necessary to temper their 'professional' tone in keeping with the straight quality implied by children's voices, and to modify any unsympathetic tendencies in their normal modes of articulation.

The last point applies to both singers and instrumentalists unused to the 'expression-free' demands of Stravinsky's music. It essentially means striving for a uniform tone, dynamic and style of

1 Dika Newlin (Four Revolutionaries in Choral Music, ed. Arthur Jacobs, Penguin, 1963, p.308) suggests that 'to acquaint singers with the note-row improves their intonation materially and makes it much easier for them to learn the complex melodic lines'.

execution (legato or various degrees of detached articulation) throughout whole phrases or even longer portions of works. It means avoiding the natural swell effects of conventional phrasing and suppressing the tyranny of bar-line accents in favour of the composer's more irregular stresses (marked separately) or even accent-free singing over-all, such as seems right in the Sacred Choruses. Music such as the Christe eleison section of the Mass combines two modes of articulation simultaneously: sostenuto imitative polyphony for the voices, staccato chording for the instruments. Stravinsky's penchant for wind-band accompaniments is a further clue as to his preferred manner of performance; string tone with vibrato is really anathema to the composer. In fact, despite his declared dislike of the organ as 'the monster that never breathes' it is this sound on which ensemble performances of his sacred music should be modelled, a sound free from indulgent self-expression on the part of the human performers. When Stravinsky heard the sentimental singing of Persephone's (secular!) opening chorus at its Paris premiere in 1934, justified on the grounds that it was 'particularly expressive music', he retorted: 'Then why do you want to make something expressive when - as you yourselves say - it already is so! It is as though one tried to sugar the sugar!'¹

¹ Recalled by Maurice Perrin in The Score, June 1957 and quoted by WW. p.567.

The Philosophy

'Stravinsky's career as a composer is as good a demonstration as any that I know of the difference between a major and a minor artist.....
A major artist is always newly finding himself, so that the history of his works recapitulates or mirrors the history of art. Once he has done something to his satisfaction, he attempts to do something he has never done before. It is only when he is dead that we are able to see that his various creations, taken together, form one consistent oeuvre'.

(W.H. Auden, The Observer, 11 April 1971)

The sacred choral music spans Stravinsky's complete working life and symbolizes both the changes and the consistency recognised by Auden. That the composer's stature was and is considerable is acknowledged universally and where his adoption of many varied styles has been criticised as so much artistic vacillation it has been counterbalanced by an awareness of a deeper, underlying aesthetic all through his career. It is now time to reconsider the limits of that aesthetic and in the case of the choral works attempt to understand the causes of their considerable current neglect. Such an understanding must centre on Stravinsky's estimation of the choral instrument, his technical command of the medium, the relationship of his works to earlier and contemporary repertoire, and his personal artistic and spiritual philosophy.

Robert Craft¹ has quoted the composer as saying that 'what

¹ Stravinsky: the chronicle of a friendship 1948-1971, Gollancz 1972, p.219.

is radical to sing sounds merely tame and archaic when played'. This encapsulates a certain distrust of choral resources which might be allied to his dislike of solo singing already referred to (p. 218 above). Yet 47 out of 109 original compositions include solo or choral voices. It is therefore necessary to examine the treatment of vocal forces to see that that distrust is borne out throughout his repertoire. It is evidenced in the rareness of unaccompanied vocal scoring (merely a response to Orthodox fiat in the early Sacred Choruses) and in the restricted vocal ranges and choral textures of pre- and post-1950 works. The language of serialism inevitably demanded more challenging writing for the human voice and it is noteworthy that the special effect of parlando is most extensively used in the mature serial pieces.

It is parlando which also represents the most truly 'human' contribution of the voices in these works for through this technique words are most simply, if less musically, communicated. Elsewhere, in the choral works of all dates, expressive, emotional singing is largely eschewed in favour of a more impersonal, even 'archaic', choral sound and literal interpreting of the chosen texts is subjugated. The texts themselves deserve consideration. Compared with his own secular works (especially Oedipus Rex) and other large-scale oratorio-type compositions of the twentieth century (King David, Belshazzar's Feast, A Child of Our Time, the War Requiem and the St. Luke Passion¹) Stravinsky chooses no dramatic, narrative texts² for his sacred music. In the main the words chosen are philosophical/theological or purely liturgical. This is in keeping with his own spiritual tastes, with his progressively more taut,

1 Penderecki.

2 The solo second movement of A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer is appropriately the exception.

Intellectual musical style post-1918 (qv. pp. 24 Chapter 3 for his views on ballet and opera between the wars) and with his special view of words as abstract phonic material. This last factor has been well documented and may even justify treating the choir in these works as just another orchestral timbre akin to the famous wordless choruses of Debussy or Holst.

But words are important - in the spirit if not in the letter. They dictate contrasts of mood. Even Stravinsky is not so intractable in matters of word-setting that he does not distinguish between Kyrie eleison and Dies irae. Indeed, though the 1948 Mass contains little traditional word-painting there is a clearly defined atmosphere for each of the five movements. More problematic is the matter of textual metre. We know the composer to have been concerned with linguistic niceties all his life and to have had a thorough working knowledge of the tongues of his adopted homelands, as well as an enormous curiosity about others.

It may have been his care for accuracy which partly determined his unconventional philosophy regarding freedom of verbal accentuation. Such declared freedom naturally avoided charges of faulty metre and came to be accepted by one critic as a totally valid artistic rationale:

'The poet provides the words and with these - with this other element of sound and this other metrical order - the composer makes a new order which is not the "words and music", but a music in which the verbal sound-values are organically fused'.¹

The composer further protected himself by laying stress on versified texts and on the use of Latin. If poetic forms are by their nature artificial presentations of the languages of everyday communication then

1 Sir Herbert Read, 'Stravinsky and the Muses', Tempo No.61-2, Spring and Summer 1962, p.15.

they are easily accommodated within Stravinsky's philosophy ('I have never been able to compose music to prose, even or especially to poetic prose.....'¹). His preference for Latin meets the requirements for universal understanding and for a heightened ritualistic ethos.

If instrumental writing still lies at the heart of Stravinsky's output it is his skill with instrumental forces large and small which gives the lie to any suggestion that lack of technique is responsible for any dullness in his scoring for voices. In fact, apart from divisi writing of an extensive nature, most standard choral techniques are to be found scattered among his works in this medium. However, it is just this dissipation of choral methods which reduces the impact of the vocal contribution in individual works - for singers and listeners alike.

Textual intelligibility will always remain a purely academic matter in choral composition and choral performance. It is rare for the skill of creator and performer(s) to be matched by ideal acoustical conditions for the clear communication of words. In this respect Stravinsky's philosophy of words as abstract sound-material is disquietingly logical. Yet if we accept Craft's description of the composer's word-setting in The Rake's Progress it would appear that Stravinsky the craftsman did consider the technicalities of verbal communication:

'The claims of English stress and accent did not trouble him very deeply. He was far more concerned with singability, with vowel sounds in vocal ranges, with the effect of words on vocal quality and the other way round.....Stravinsky was keener than the librettists themselves that every word should be heard'.²

1 TC. p.77 - a statement made in 1965 concerning his need for Auden to provide a versified libretto for The Rake's Progress.

2 Robert Craft, 'A Personal Preface', The Score, June 1957 quoted in WW. pp.458-9.

The fact, borne out here by Craft's detailed examples, is that such concern could only be effectively lavished on solo vocal writing. There is no evidence of 'singability' problems in choral works before the great opera. In particular, massed voices are seldom challenged with the extremes of range so vulnerable to ill-chosen vowel sounds, for example. One may perhaps quibble over the high soprano and bass notes to closed vowels in bars 61-2 of the opening of the Symphony of Psalms (qv. Ex.6 above) but they do not compare with Anne Trulove's high C ending Act I of The Rake's Progress. 'Singability' is more of an issue when one turns to the later serial choruses.

It is somewhat ironic that Stravinsky becomes more adventurous in his writing for choirs when he has to meet the exigencies of a much less approachable idiom from 1955 onwards. He responds to this with mobile melodic lines of wider range, free crossings of parts and fluent polyphonic textures, plus the added device of choral speech. But serialism is by its mathematical nature unemotional and intellectual - perfectly in tune with Stravinsky's own artistic outlook. It is a compositional method whereby melodic angularity and built-in tonal waywardness instantly de-humanise singing, that most direct of musical activities. It undermines confidence in intonation and balancing of parts and in Stravinsky's case, by maintaining the considerable degree of syllabic underlay found throughout his career, neglects the lyrical flow of line which is a hallmark of choral sound. A severe indictment of Stravinsky's adoption of the Method, especially in choral music, comes from one who has otherwise every sympathy with the principle of serialism, Reginald Smith Brindle:

'There is absolutely no reason why such serial works as Stravinsky's Threni..... could not have been written in a free style, without using any series. The only reason which can be advanced is that the works would lack 'serial unity'. But as composers usually strive to avoid too-obvious serial relationships and aim for thematic variety rather than

constancy, the continuous recurrence of the series is rarely audible and therefore 'serial unity' is often enough a chimera of questionable value. The only kind of audible unity a series can provide is one of thematic character and if such thematic unity (is needed, it can easily be provided through free composition, rather than by the roundabout method of serial practice'. 1

Though this thought is extended by its author to Schoenberg's Moses and Aaron and Berg's Lulu it must thereby reinforce the doubts concerning this system held by many choralists and listeners respectively where twelve-note vocal music is concerned. If, on the other hand, a process of de-humanising seems particularly appropriate to religious music one might accept the milder caution of Wilfrid Mellers:

'..... It has been frequently pointed out that Stravinsky does not employ his rows in a Webernesque spirit but in a more literal sense - in much the same way as a medieval composer used his cantus firmus as the Word. The difference, of course, lies in the fact that the cantus firmus did have doctrinal significance which was intelligible to at least a fair proportion of the people who listened to, participated in, the music'. 2

In many ways the most effective serial work is the (unusually) unaccompanied Anthem which contains ingredients not always present in the larger-scale works of this phase. It has varied groupings of the SATB texture, some triadic writing both horizontal and vertical, some attempt at word-painting and a much stronger element of formal, as well as tonal, repetition between the two verses set. Pitch repetition (included to imposing effect in the Requiem Canticles) was an individual feature of Stravinsky's own serial method just as formal balance was a typical aspect of many pre- and post-1950 works. Had he come to dodecaphony earlier he may well have subordinated the more ascetic characteristics of melody and resulting harmony to such structural and even expressive qualities evident in The dove descending.

1 Reginald Smith Brindle, Serial Composition, O.U.P. 1966, p.193. Referring to the Canticum Sacerum in MT. Nov. 1956 (p.599) Brindle wrote: 'This cantata seems to indicate that Stravinsky's personality and dodecaphony are two incompatible things'.

2 W. Mellers, *op cit.* p.311.

Elsewhere the choral repertoire of the 'non-lyrical' Stravinsky emphasises diatonic/modal themes of limited range with strong hints of ostinato-like repetitions of motifs. Most of these characteristics were inherited from his Russian past and can all be found in his own secular song output before 1920 (eg. Three Tales for Children (1915), Berceuse (1917), Four Russian Solo Songs (1919)). The Wedding combines this folk-song inheritance with the chant melodies of Orthodox religion - the key influence on the sacred choral compositions up to 1948. Conjoint motion, homophony, syllabic underlay and limited dynamic ranges dominate here and detach Stravinsky's oeuvre from the mainstream of contemporary European choral music. Both singers and audiences must understand this austerity not only as part of a specific religious culture but as part of the composer's own musical aesthetic after his initial so-called Russian period.

So closely is expressive reserve allied to the requirements of ritual that a strong case might be put for performing the bulk of the sacred works in churches. All the attendant acoustical problems might be balanced by the added warmth given to the asperities of so much of this music, early to late, and there would be a further psychological benefit for both performers and listeners. That the composer would have acquiesced in such a performing environment must be obvious from the whole 1956 'Concert for St. Mark's (Venice)' as well as his personal intention that the Mass and the earlier Sacred Choruses should be used liturgically.

Technically there is considerable originality in all the sacred works for chorus in terms of over-all construction, choice of media, choice and ordering of texts, and adept handling of all instrumental accompaniments. But as was the case with his Russian mentor, all this creative instinct was brought to the service of choral scoring which

could be abstruse, jejune and anti-vocal by turns.

Stravinsky's own religious philosophy was in total sympathy with the great ritualistic faiths of the past, the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic, and if he looked to earlier models for his own sacred music it was to the more austere works of his fellow countrymen or else to mature renaissance music of Western Europe that he turned. Operatic Verdi may show in parts of Oedipus Rex but the secular never infiltrates the sacred in Stravinsky's output. As he refrained from using the narrative-style texts of traditional oratorio we hear little of the often vivid pictorialism in the works of his contemporaries. Cold detachment is the broad characteristic of the choral components in the sacred works, a spirit in keeping with ritual devotion as well as with the cerebral nature of serialism and the clinical manner of the composer's own artistry from the so-called 'neo-classical' phase onwards. Thus in approachability for both performers and listeners there seems little to choose between early and late choral works. It is perhaps too easy to make the twelve-note music the principal scapegoat in the minds of detractors but the following judgement predates the first serial work:

'..... as regards the actual musical language of this composer there is no doubt that its harmonic asperities and rhythmic eccentricities, combined with what appears to be a marked deficiency in lyrical warmth and purely sensuous appeal, have made it difficult to assimilate'.¹

The difference between pre- and post-1950 asperities may be that the former result from a conscious primitivism that can easily be associated with long established religious ritual whereas the sounds of the latter are intrinsically calculated and therefore somewhat artificial. The entire Stravinsky choral canon sublimates emotion in a way entirely apt

¹ Rollo H. Myers, Vol. 8 Grove's Dictionary, 5th. edition 1954, p.141.

for transcendent worship-through-music. It is the degree of sublimation which seems to intensify chronologically.

'The adoption of serial techniques does not betoken any radical change in his approach, though the results are often as not far less attractive than his earlier compositions'.¹

A crudely biased Soviet view of the later sacred works is sketched by Boris Schwarz in the 1962 Stravinsky anniversary issue of the Musical Quarterly:²

'Stravinsky's recent inclination towards Church-connected music (Canticum Sacrum, Threni) is interpreted as a "panicky flight from contemporary reality", while his efforts to draft serial technique upon liturgical music are allegedly dictated by his fear of appearing an "outmoded academician". But "neither the ~~Pope~~ nor Webern is able to uphold the growing creative decrepitude of an artist who once gave to the world the wonders of Firebird and Petrushka, or to return to him his past belief in his art, in his muse, in himself....."

So much of this fails to recognise the consistency of both the composer's religious and artistic faith. Yet Shneyerson's balancing of the late works against the earliest is representative of a wider international reaction which the composer himself was well aware of. In 1962 he calculated that American sales of a new Firebird recording would reach 30,000 - 50,000 whereas more recent works such as A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer or The Flood would be lucky to sell 3,000 - 5,000 (WW.p.135).

For sympathetic and at times powerful handling of choral voices the hieratic Symphony of Psalms and the Mass represent the peaks of Stravinsky's sacred writings. Each has a total evocative atmosphere created from interesting detail and only the Requiem Canticles approaches this kind of uniform impact. Melodic character, so unpredictable in this particular composer, reaches clear definition in the

¹ Anthony Milner, op cit. p.371.

² p.358. The quotations are from Grigory Shneyerson, O Muzyke zhyvoi i mertvoi, Moscow 1960, pp. 144ff.

fugue and even pure lyricism in the finale of the Symphony while the Mass exploits the hypnotic power of ecclesiastical chanting in both its unadorned, homophonic sobriety and its medieval incantatory ornamentation. Neither work achieves, nor indeed strives for, the colourful imagery - and, in the earlier case, variety of choral effects - of The Wedding or Oedipus Rex. Both of these secular pieces exploit most fully the potential of their respective choral resources and though both contain elements of ritual it is their warm earthliness which makes them rewarding for choralists and audiences alike. They deserve more frequent performances than at present.

'Whatever the future, the size, significance and diversity of his existing choral oeuvre speaks for itself, and represents beyond doubt the greatest individual contribution in this century to the repertoire of this transcendental yet in many ways recalcitrant medium'.¹

Stephen Walsh's eulogy followed unknowingly the completion of Stravinsky's last choral work. Thirteen years later the same critic mused over the 'curious and even rather a disconcerting phenomenon' of the continued neglect of Stravinsky's late works.² He suggested performing difficulties as a possible reason (qv. p. 160 above) and many technical challenges in the serial works outlined in this study would reinforce that notion. But if the professional orientation of Stravinsky's output claimed above (p. 260) is accepted then there are enough skilled chamber choirs and more than enough instrumental ensembles capable of meeting those challenges. Current neglect would then have to be seen against a

1 Stephen Walsh, op cit. p.51.

2 The Observer, 9 Mar. 1980.

background of public attitudes to the composer's artistic and religious philosophy.

In 1934 Constant Lambert felt that in Stravinsky '.....there has always been an almost hieratic earnestness about his apparently facetious technical juggling'¹ and therein introduced a word which has summed up for many critics the whole of Stravinsky's religious music - hieratic. Writing ten years later Aaron Copland concluded that

'..... Stravinsky is the Henry James of composers. Same "exile" psychology, same exquisite perfection, same hold on certain artistic temperaments, same lack of immediacy of contact with the world around him'.²

And to Wilfrid Mellers 'music has always been ritual'³ for this composer.

Indeed, outside of the neo-romanticism of The Firebird (and less extensively Zvezdoliki, Apollo Musagetes, The Fairy's Kiss and parts of Persephone)

there are few works in the composer's output which do not have a broadly dispassionate, objective aura about them.⁴ 'There is a tremendous difference between a ritual such as Le Sacre, which is a blazing experience, and the Mass and Canticum Sacrum, which are formal thought and dogma'.⁵

That this unemotional objectivity, so easily demonstrable in the technicalities of instrumental music, should be extended to works with massed voices brings a new dimension to that 'recalcitrant medium' and in particular to settings of sacred texts where the nearest equivalent remoteness would be that of ethereal renaissance polyphony. To eschew sentiment and the imposing of mortal frailty on often deeply reflective texts can stiffen the sinews

1 Lambert, op cit. p.97.

2 Quoted in H.Schonberg, Lives of the Great Composers, Davis-Poynter 1970, p.479.

3 W. Mellers, op cit. p.300.

4 In his neo-classical phase he expressed a wish 'to establish order and discipline in the purely sonorous scheme to which I always give precedence over elements of an emotional character' (CH. p.109).

5 Paul H. Lang, op cit. p.367.

of the devout and in correct physical context the purely liturgical works of Stravinsky have considerable strength. Yet texts and music, like all forms of worship and ritual, are man-made and at least one eminent musician has felt, along with many choral singers, a certain discomfort at so much calculated detachment. In a letter of 8 February 1949 which deeply offended the composer Ernest Ansermet suggested that

'You place too much emphasis on your technical powers and on your knowledge and not enough on the music itself and on your instincts. No matter what you say about art being simply a "product", in the end it is made by a man, and when you decided to make this Mass, it was not that you merely wanted to create a kind of Flemish motet in your style. You are also a believer who wanted to pay homage to his God'.

This begs the question, now impossible to answer with assurance, of Stravinsky's spiritual integrity.

The facts about the composer's attitude to religious matters have already been stated (Chapter 3) and from these a picture emerges of a man whose personal devotions teetered precariously on the brink of primitive superstition, yet whose support of organised religion could be somewhat erratic. He read extensively among the writings of theologians and mystics and his scriptural knowledge is also evident from his carefully chosen texts in the works described here. But being very much a man of his time must have coloured his artistic response to matters of faith. Perhaps, as Paul Lang puts it, 'form and mindfulness always remain most sensitively fused, but the lack of feeling reflects the sterilities of the scientific age that is upon us'.¹ This critic goes on to question whether Stravinsky is a genuinely religious composer of sacred music:

'No, he could not be, for his ideal world is too little concerned with the

¹ *ibid.* p.363.

final inwardness of life, In reality, nowhere in the many works written since he became a representative of contemporary Western music was he able to transcend his egoism, therefore his spiritual centre lies somewhere between dream and make-believe. A religiosity in which the last thing is missing cannot become altogether genuine'.¹

Such a view obviously weakens the status of the sacred pieces irrespective of their technical characteristics. The latter have been fully described and despite the quantity of choral music in Stravinsky's catalogue the sameness of so much of the choral scoring (especially when compared to the subtle handling of instruments) seems to reveal a lack of real sympathy with the medium. Yet the importance of these works lies in their inherently religious character. Stravinsky could have created a religious/hieratic atmosphere in purely abstract music, as in a work like Messiaen's Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum, but instead preferred to spell out his intentions through the traditional medium of the sung word. He does so in a unique body of material in which the choices of texts, forms and performing forces are always entirely individual and where craftsmanship is always of a high order (if somewhat curtailed in the vocal components). Perhaps Stravinsky himself answers all shades of reaction to his sacred music when he declared that 'one hopes to worship God with a little art if one has any, and if one hasn't, and cannot recognise it in others, then one can at least burn a little incense'.²

1 *ibid.* p. 371.

2 *DD.* p. 46.

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(1956)			
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(1960)			
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(1961)			
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(1962)	Mass	Chorus and Columbia Symph. Winds cond. Stravinsky	
CBS SBRG 72071 (S)	Les Noces (In English (+ Renard and Ragtime)	American Concert Choir, Columbia Percussion Ensemble cond. Stravinsky	Dec. 1962 p.300
(1962)			
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(1963)			
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(1965)			

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(M) - Mono

(S) - Stereo

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